

EVIL AS ANTHROPOCENTRICISM: RESOLVING THE
AMBIGUITY OF SCHELLINGIAN EVIL IN THE
*FREIHEITSSCHRIFT*¹ THROUGH AN APPLICATION OF
ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS.

By © Phoebe Page. A Thesis submitted to the School of Graduate Studies in partial
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¹ F J W Schelling. *Philosophical Inquiries into the Nature of Human Freedom*, trans J Gutmann (Illinois: Open Court, 1992).

ABSTRACT: Schellingian human freedom is the capacity for good and evil. This is what distinguishes humans from other beings. Despite Schelling's articulation of this capacity formally, what remains unanswered is what evil looks like in the world. This investigation speculatively reads Schellingian evil as anthropocentrism and demonstrates that the central characteristics of both are resoundingly similar. I consider anthropocentrism within environmental ethics and ecofeminism, extracting the implications and ask what this means for Schellingian evil and critically, what do we do now? As such, this investigation examines the structure of the text outlined in the law of identity, and how this Spinozistic outline is furnished with Jakob Böhme's concepts, considering what the implications are for Schellingian evil and beyond. This forms the ground for my central argument: that the ambiguity of what Schellingian evil looks like in the world can be understood in environmental terms as anthropocentrism.

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Introductory Remarks

Schelling's *Freiheitsschrift* investigates what human freedom is. Schelling claims that "the real and vital conception of freedom is that it is a possibility of good and evil".² What distinguishes the human being is thus their capacity to do good *and* evil. Yet, what constitutes evil in the world remains ambiguous in the *Freiheitsschrift*. Thus, this investigation offers a speculative reading of Schellingian evil as anthropocentric action and thus actualised through the destruction of the environment. As Morrow remarks, given the danger of global destruction, it may be "catastrophic not to think clearly about evil, not to be aware of what it is capable of doing."³ It is thus critical that both evil and the global environmental crisis are engaged with philosophically and I argue, that these discussions can be brought together within Schellingian thought. It is the task of this investigation to examine how Schelling's *Freiheitsschrift* positions itself in order to answer the question of what is evil, and then analyse Schellingian evil within environmental philosophy. The aim is thus to demonstrate how Schelling is a significant thinker that can offer philosophical considerations to compliment and bolster the arguments of environmentalism. I will argue for this a speculative reading of the *Freiheitsschrift* by emphasising the law of identity, the *Ungrund* and the influence of Jakob Böhme that will guide this project. Thus, when tasked with how we ought to act now, I follow White that "unless we think about fundamentals, our specific measurements may produce new backlashes more

² Schelling. *Philosophical Inquiries into the Nature of Human Freedom*, 26.

³ L Morrow. *Evil: An Investigation* (New York: Basic Books, 2003), 5.

serious than those they are designed to remedy.”⁴ As such, this project will investigate how Schelling’s conception of human freedom is intimately related to anthropocentrism and ecocentrism. Central to my argument will be an analysis of hierarchy. As it shall be demonstrated, Schelling requires a kind of order to maintain moral responsibility in the *Freiheitsschrift*, otherwise he risks the amorality of the *Naturphilosophie*. I will analyse the problem of the *Naturphilosophie* in S1 and continue the discussion of hierarchy and order throughout this project. I will offer critical objections to the notion of value hierarchies within the *Freiheitsschrift*, and rather argue for an order of complexity. This will support my argument that Schellingian evil is anthropocentric and that the *Freiheitsschrift* can be interpreted to be situated within an ecocentric position. A question that emerges from this discussion of Schellingian order and identity is whether Schelling’s union of realism and idealism truly eliminates this problematic dualism, or whether it simply takes another implicit form?

A clarification is required from the outset of this investigation. As the *Freiheitsschrift* is concerned with human freedom, I must first address the content of the term ‘human’. Significantly, “the western rationalist ideas of the human embody norms not only of gender exclusion but of race, class and species exclusion.”⁵ As such, it must be emphasised that throughout, when I refer to the human being in terms of the *Freiheitsschrift*, I am not concerned with the western exclusionary term, but rather speak of the human being as the collective of differentiated, respected beings that share the capacity for good and evil. As it will become apparent that in the discussion of anthropocentrism, the notion of human according to western culture is not only

⁴ Lynn White. ‘The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis’ *Science* No. 155, (1967): 1204.

⁵ Val Plumwood. *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature* (London: Routledge, 1993), 26.

significant but can be understood as precisely embodying anthropocentrism. For, as I will argue, anthropocentrism has consistent features with the false western universalisation of the human insofar as it primarily denies dependency and intrinsic value.

Structural Outline

To remain concise, I will focus almost exclusively on Schelling's *Freiheitsschrift* from his middle period. Within this text, he announces his first attempt at ethical considerations, and through a logic that is distinct from his earlier *Naturphilosophie* texts. As such, it is the *Freiheitsschrift* that is the basis for my reading of Schellingian evil as anthropocentrism. However, to introduce this project I will begin in S1 with a discussion of the *Naturphilosophie*, illustrating its inadequacy for dealing with ecological questions, and yet recognising that the creative aspect of nature found here is essential to understanding the *Freiheitsschrift*. This will demonstrate why I have chosen to use the *Freiheitsschrift* and act as an entrance into how to address environmental questions within Schellingian thought. From here, in S2 I will consider the metaphysics of the *Freiheitsschrift* itself. This will include a detailed analysis of the law of identity Schelling explicates, how this is related to Spinoza, and crucially how Schelling's metaphysics carry the signature of Jacob Böhme that furnishes the formal structure of the law of identity. Despite Schelling not acknowledging Böhme's work, I will follow McGrath in bringing to light crucial elements of the *Freiheitsschrift* that echo Böhman thought.⁶ This section will therefore consider the distinction between the *Ungrund*, *grund* and consequent in relation to the law of identity and Böhme as this is critical to how evil can be understood and the operation of *grund* that makes evil possible. S3 will ask the question "what is the human being?" That is, how is the human being related to nature, the *Ungrund* and God? Significant for this will be the law of

⁶ Sean McGrath. *The Dark Ground of Spirit: Schelling and the Unconscious* (Hove: Routledge, 2012).

identity and the role of Böhme's dark and light principles that I outline in S2. I will consider what Schellingian goodness is and how the *Ungrund* is pivotal for what constitutes this, and later how this relates to an ecocentric position. Within this section I will examine Schelling's rejection of previous formulations of evil, in particular Leibnizian evil as a privation. Emphasising the failures of the other conceptions of evil will allow for Schelling's understanding of it to be brought forth in S4. I will end S3 with an evaluation of the notion of hierarchy within the *Freiheitsschrift* and assess how this impacts the arguments of this investigation. S4 will begin with a detailed examination of Schellingian evil. It will identify the Kantian and Böhman characteristics and how these relate to the formal structure of the law of identity. From here, I will introduce the central concepts of environmental philosophy that will be aligned to Schellingian good and evil; ecocentrism and anthropocentrism. I will argue how these positions within environmental philosophy map to what human freedom is within the *Freiheitsschrift*, first regarding anthropocentrism and evil, then how the *Ungrund* in supports reading the *Freiheitsschrift* as advocating an ecocentric perspective. S4 will close with an evaluation of ecofeminist thought to support the speculative reading I am offering in this investigation and critique the position of anthropocentrism. To end this project, in S5 I will offer some final remarks regarding what issues remain, what questions are raised, and where this project can lead us.

Section One: Schelling's *Naturphilosophie*: How is it inadequate to answer questions regarding environmental concerns?

To begin asking questions regarding ecological and environmental problems, we first require a robust idea of nature. In this section, I will address the character of nature explored by Schelling in the *Naturphilosophie*.⁷ I will evaluate how it can be useful to addressing environmental questions yet is ultimately inadequate. This section will therefore argue why the *Freiheitsschrift* is the appropriate text to articulate evil in relation to environmental difficulties. I will argue that the *Naturphilosophie* is useful insofar as it emphasises creativity and activity, yet this notion of nature can be equally problematic if it is not supplemented by an account of individuals with the capacity for good and evil. We will come to see that the *Naturphilosophie*, prior to the *Freiheitsschrift*, is inadequate to address environmental problems as it lacks just this. However, it ought not be pushed aside. What it can offer us is a nature capable of change, novelty and continuation. Only with this as a basis it is then possible, as Schelling did, to move onto developing notions of human agency that are required to deal with the environmental problems that we create.⁸ It is the *Freiheitsschrift* that achieves this.

⁷ To be concise and focused, I will limit this to only the *First Outline for a Philosophy of Nature*, and the *Ideas for the Philosophy of Nature*. It is here, that the main structure of nature itself is explored with greatest clarity and breadth.

⁸ Creation in two senses; 1) Our creation of objects, burning of fuel, etc. that contribute to climate change, and species extinction that are significant elements of ecological disaster. 2) We create ecological problems, insofar as we view the world as something that is other to us, and that we can impact. Ecological problems occur due to human activity, it is something we do. This point will be fleshed out throughout the project and constitutes what I argue evil action equates to for Schelling.

This section will thus be structured accordingly. I will begin with an outline of the *Naturphilosophie's* nature. I will examine Schelling's distinction between unconditioned nature, and the "apparent products" of this activity. This will demonstrate the central characteristics of the *Naturphilosophie*, and introduce Schelling's relationship to Spinoza that will be developed throughout this thesis. For, it is within the *Naturphilosophie* that Schelling is closer to Spinoza and the critiques I will offer of the *Naturphilosophie* indicate why Schelling moves away from Spinoza in the *Freiheitsschrift*. Following this analysis, I will briefly evaluate the positive and negative aspects of this in relation to environmentalism. This will lead to the issues of thinking about environmentalism within the *Naturphilosophie's* framework alone, and an analysis of what is lacking in the *Naturphilosophie*. From here, I will argue how it is thus inadequate, whilst indicating what remains useful within this conception of nature. To end this section, I will begin to consider why the *Freiheitsschrift* is the place which provides the tools for beginning to think environmentally with Schelling.

Firstly, it is arguable that the *First Outline*⁹ and *Ideas*¹⁰ are a response to mechanistic conceptions of nature. Kant's critical project, due to his Newtonianism, created a gulf between the *phenomenal* and *noumenal*.¹¹ Otherwise put, creativity and freedom were irreparably separated from a merely mechanical nature. Nature as

⁹ F J W Schelling, *First Outline of a System of the Philosophy of Nature*, trans K Peterson (Albany, SUNY Press, 2004).

¹⁰ F J W Schelling, *Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature*, trans E Harris and P Heath (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

¹¹ In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant states how "we must bear in mind that the concept of appearances [...] establishes the objective reality of noumena and justifies the division of objects into phaenomena and noumena, and so of the world into a world of the senses and a world of the understanding [...] to the difference in the manner in which the two worlds can be first given to our knowledge, and in conformity with this difference, to the manner in which they are in themselves generically distinct from one another." Immanuel Kant. *Critique of Pure Reason*. Trans; Norman Kemp Smith (London: Macmillan, 1983), 266. Thus, explicating how phenomena and noumena are differentiated into 'two worlds' insofar as phenomena are knowable to finite beings like us, whereas we cannot purely intuit noumena in the same way.

governed by natural laws lacks creative activity, thus disconnecting free human action from the world itself. What is at issue is that Kant removes the ability to recognise the earth as essential to our freedom, at least insofar as our knowable self is only mechanistic.¹² The depth of this problem is expressed in the *Freiheitsschrift*, as Schelling claims that, the whole of European philosophy is inadequate insofar as “nature does not exist for it and it lacks a living basis.”¹³ Thus, Schelling’s *Naturphilosophie* is an attempt to reconceptualise nature in an active manner, inclusive of freedom, novelty, and dynamic action. Despite its inability to understand human freedom as such, I will argue that it is successful in its understanding of nature as essentially active and containing a *plasticity in itself* that is responsive to environmental issues and events.

In the *Ideas*, Schelling claims that, “Nature should be Mind made visible, Mind the invisible Nature.”¹⁴ That is, what is considered mind, or spirit, is externally manifest in nature and vice versa. This removes the boundary between the *phenomenal* and *noumenal* in Kant to the extent that there is no longer a gulf between spirit and nature. As McGrath notes, what “remains consistent between the later and the early Schelling is the refusal to follow the trajectory of early modernity and split spirit from nature.”¹⁵ Thus, the removal of the separation of spirit and nature is a commitment of Schelling’s from his *Naturphilosophie* through the *Freiheitsschrift* into his later works.¹⁶ Further,

¹² Assiter summaries the consequences of Kant’s division of phenomena and noumena for human freedom demonstrating how this dualism is problematic for thinking about freedom, and our relation to the earth; “Kant’s view of mechanical nature shapes his perspective on the free self as a radically different kind of thing. The self, then, becomes a divided entity. It is divided between a phenomenal, desiring, natural thing determined by Newtonian causal principles and a rational and free being, shaped by the moral law.” Alison Assiter. *Kierkegaard, Eve and Metaphors of Birth* (London: Rowman and Littlefield, 2015), 42.

¹³ Schelling. *Philosophical Inquiries into the Nature of Human Freedom*, 30.

¹⁴ Schelling, *Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature*, 40.

¹⁵ McGrath. *The Dark Ground of Spirit: Schelling and the Unconscious*, 4.

¹⁶ See: F W J Schelling, *The Ages of the World*, trans J Wirth (Albany: SUNY Press, 2000); F W J Schelling, *The Grounding of Positive Philosophy: The Berlin Lectures*. Trans B Matthews (Albany: SUNY Press, 2008).

activity is the central characteristic of the *First Outline* and *Ideas*. As the *First Outline* claims, “since construction is thinkable at all only as activity, *being itself* is nothing other than the *highest constructing activity*, which, although never itself an object, is the principle of everything objective.”¹⁷ Being itself is essential active and self-constructing. Behind or within, everything objective lies a creative activity; an activity that gives rise to objects that are the manifestation of its powers. Natural beings are constructed by this activity of Being, and retain this active quality within themselves, or rather as Schelling argues, *they are nothing more than this activity*. Critically then, nature is known by its activity rather than its products. The continuous manifestation of this activity as productions of nature thus demonstrates that nature is in itself active and not exhaustive.

A central thesis of the *First Outline* is that nature is not limited to what we experience within the world. Rather, for Schelling, nature in the broadest sense is the activity that produces natural beings. In this way, Schelling takes up the Spinozistic distinction between *natura naturata* (manifest nature) and *natura naturans* (unconditioned nature). The *natura naturans* produces the *naturata*. Moreover, it is the activity of nature that Schelling is mostly concerned with in the *Naturphilosophie*. For, in the beginning of the *First Outline*, we find the claim:

“The unconditioned cannot be sought in any individual “thing” nor in anything of which one can say that it “is”. For what “is” only partakes of being, and is only an individual form or kind of being. – Conversely, one can never say of the unconditioned that it “is”. For it is BEING ITSELF, and as such, it does not exhibit itself entirely in any finite product, and every individual is, as it were, a particular expression of it.”¹⁸

¹⁷ Schelling, *First Outline of a System of the Philosophy of Nature*, 16.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, 13.

The activity of nature is the unconditioned. Insofar as it cannot be reduced to a singular “thing”, it is an activity that exceeds all *beings*. As such, this unconditioned activity can be understood as the *natura naturans* that gives rise to the *natura naturata*. This demonstrates the Spinozistic tendency of Schelling thought in the *First Outline* insofar as all manifest nature is derived from an ultimate unconditioned source and cannot obtain reality in itself apart from its connection to the activity. Moreover, Schelling claims that this activity is “Being Itself” and in this sense, it is absolute. As unconditioned it precedes all determination and itself does not contain any determination or conditions. The natural beings we encounter in the world “partake” in the unconditioned activity of nature insofar as they manifest this activity. This is a crucial aspect of the *Naturphilosophie*, namely that the unconditioned activity endlessly manifests itself as products. Its manifestation is endless due to its status as unconditioned since this entails that it does not have limits. Therefore, Schelling understands the natural world to be an ongoing drive for the unconditioned absolute to manifest itself.

As such, this central thesis of the *First Outline* is expressed in the statement that “the chief problem of the philosophy of nature is not to explain the *active* in Nature [...] but the *resting, permanent*.”¹⁹ That is, for Schelling the problem of nature is not to understand how it is active, but how there are natural objects that appear to be permanent given the endless activity of nature itself. Moreover, Steigerward summarises that for Schelling “all natural phenomena must be conceived as an interplay of attractive and repulsive forces in varying degrees of complexity and activity.”²⁰ The structure of

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 17.

²⁰ Joan Steigerward, “Epistemologies of Rupture: The Problem of Nature in Schelling’s Philosophy”. *Stud Romanticism* 41, no. 4, Winter 2002, 554.

expansion and contraction as the forces of nature allows Schelling's *Naturphilosophie* to account for the ongoing processes of nature. For instance, those that are expressed in changes of seasons, turbulent weather systems and the changes and adaptations in organic matter and species. These can all be understood as the push and pull of different forces. However, it ought to be kept in mind that within the *Naturphilosophie*'s formulation these "individual productions in Nature are merely apparent products."²¹ Their being is thus strikingly contingent; they are nothing other than the activity of nature, of opposed forces that do not find equilibrium. As, "Nature as subject continues irresistibly, and while it continually labors in opposition to all permanence."²²

This nature as subject is "the absolute product that *always becomes and never is*."²³ It is the unrelenting power of becoming that manifests in 'apparent products' and cannot be identified as anything concrete. This means that we cannot point to any natural object and say 'This is the activity of nature', rather we can only infer from the changes in the world that there is *natura naturans*. In addition to the Platonic characterisation, this notion echoes the Heraclitean aphorism that "Nature loves to conceal herself."²⁴ That is, nature remains a hidden power, an activity that persists and is "presented by *infinite becoming*, where the intuition of the infinite lies in no individual moment, but is only *to be produced* in an endless progression."²⁵ As Hadot notes, Schelling "rediscovers, in his definition of nature, the ancient meaning of *phusis*,

²¹ Schelling, *First Outline of a System of the Philosophy of Nature*, 16.

²² *Ibid*, 17.

²³ *Ibid*, 16. This notion is taken from Plato's *Timaeus*. Although we do not have time to explore this, it is worth noting that Schelling is here working with a platonic concept.

²⁴ G.T.W Patrick, *The Fragments of the work of Heraclitus of Ephesus on Nature* (Baltimore: Press of Isaac Friedenwalk, 1888), 86.

²⁵ Schelling, *First Outline of a System of the Philosophy of Nature*, 15.

that is, of productivity and spontaneous blossoming.”²⁶ Schelling’s conceptualisation of nature, thus follows the ancient tradition insofar as it speaks of nature in its activity, becoming and its hidden character.

Further to this, the *Naturphilosophie* offers a novel account of causation. Instead of linear mechanical causation, causation is reciprocal.²⁷ Similar to how powers engage with one another, Schelling’s remodelling of causality conceives of both cause and effect as active participants.²⁸ As nature is activity, reciprocal causation makes sense within the *Naturphilosophie* framework. The possibility of change is active in both elements and thus not restricted to the cause alone. This does two things: It narrows the gap between human activity and the world as the world is participating in our actions, as it is an active force in response to, and guiding our actions; secondly, it indicates a plasticity in nature that is capable of adapting. The world is actively engaged with the changes that take place within it. Thus, it allows for a mutual engagement between natural beings that is significant in the *Freiheitsschrift* and will be crucial to my thesis argument for what determines evil for Schelling.

If we consider the *Naturphilosophie* in terms of environmental questions, we see how this conception of nature could be potentially dangerous. On the one hand, if we take nature as activity, then our actions that change the world around us make sense. If being is essentially active, then we can understand our actions are part of nature’s activity. As Marx notes, “for Schelling “nature” was the *natura naturans* that produces

²⁶ Pierre Hadot, *The Veil of Isis: An Essay on the History of the Idea of Nature*, trans M Chase (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006), 274.

²⁷ For Schelling, one reason why Kant’s philosophy was inadequate was “the result of the false mechanistic view of causality that Kant had endorsed.” Michelle Kosch, *Freedom and Reason in Kant, Schelling, and Kierkegaard* (Oxford: Clarendon Press 2006), 74.

²⁸ We will return to the significance of reciprocity later, as we see the *Freiheitsschrift*’s law of identity emphasises the reciprocal dependency of antecedent and consequent.

its *naturata*. It was life in its living genesis.”²⁹ That is, *our activity is nature’s activity*. We cannot break the laws of nature as *we are nature*. Yet, an issue remains. How can we understand it as *our activity*? The *Naturphilosophie* is unable to explain this, as all activity belongs to nature, not this or that ‘apparent product’ of nature. In other words, since all that we experience as nature is the manifestation of the unconditioned activity, then responsibility for action only features insofar as beings “partake” in the activity of nature. Yet, this is problematic for considering environmental responsibility, as the only response to a call for responsibility is to state that it is the actions of nature’s activity. In this way, no actions can be understood as ‘good’ or ‘evil’ as the only basis for judgment is the unconditioned activity of nature. Thus, the *Naturphilosophie* is unable to ground individuals within their own right, and therefore reduces natural being’s actions to be real only insofar as they manifest nature’s activity.

Significantly, this can be problematic as it leads to a disconnect between natural being’s actions, and nature itself *qua* activity. In the language of forces, our expansive force to transfigure the world is constraining of nature itself. Yet, in the *Naturphilosophie*, this is *just* the activity of nature. We cannot be recognised as individual aspects of nature, and thus there can be no moral dimension that permits our actions to be *our* responsibility. Our actions become subsumed within nature, and there is no cause for concern. At this level, posing environmental questions becomes meaningless. What occurs is just *natura naturans* and our actions are nature’s. There can be no real emphasis on how we have disrupted or impacted nature in a meaningful sense as we are merely ‘apparent’. Questions regarding human initiated climate change

²⁹ Werner Marx. *The Philosophy of F.W.J Schelling: History, System, and Freedom*, trans, T Nenon (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 58.

cannot even be raised if we understand the world as nothing other than an “absolute product that *always becomes and never is*.” In this sense, the *Naturphilosophie* is potentially dangerous insofar as it does not allow for questions of responsibility to be posed.

The central issue with the *First Outline* and *Ideas* then is that they grant no independence to individuals. Even if we grant them as parts of the whole, they remain merely apparent. In consequence, there is no way to understand the actions of human beings, creatures, weather systems and so on as significant in themselves. The notion of humans being responsible for altering the world is just incoherent. There becomes a sense in which it could be argued that deforestation is part of nature’s activity as reciprocal causation implies the forest was actively engaged in its destruction. This much is perhaps permitted. However, implicit within this argument is a sense in which nature itself destroys the forest as it is part of nature’s activity that wants to continually become. This indicates a central issue for approaching environmentalism through the *Naturphilosophie* insofar as no environmental responsibility can be given to those whom destroy the forest. Within the context of the *First Outline*, this would simply be a failure of the unconditioned activity of nature to adequately express itself and thus the “apparent product” *qua* forest, is destroyed in order for previously unmanifest activity to be actualised.

Moreover, consider the following scenario. If an objector to climate change stepped forth and used this argument, then one must respond with the question of how they came to an idea of judgment and goals within the activity of nature itself. Are they not presupposing a kind of ethical dimension within nature? Despite Steigerwald’s claim that “for Schelling, all of nature and each part of nature was to be understood like

an organism,”³⁰ the *Naturphilosophie* does not provide the grounds for an ethics. The only *telos* given is of continuous creation. The rubric does not contain a notion of what is ethically permissible, nor what is not. As Grant notes, “the ethical dimension of the question of freedom therefore necessarily opens on to its metaphysical dimension.”³¹ Yet, the metaphysics of the *Naturphilosophie* do not provide us with the tools to build up an ethical dimension. Individuals are merely apparent products in nature. Their activity is bound only to follow this continuous activity. There is no account of specific human freedom present. To an objector then, one must ask how they have grounded their ethics within the framework of the *Naturphilosophie* given that the only *telos* suggested by Schelling is that of an endless drive to manifest itself. Whilst an objector may appeal to this notion of nature wanting to be altered in order to accommodate further manifestations of the unconditioned activity, the *Naturphilosophie* provides no basis for this to be extended in terms of responsibility or moral judgment. If an objector to human driven climate change were to appeal to this notion of nature wanting to be altered, then one must ask them on what grounds they have to give nature this character. To speak of nature’s activity as containing an ethical dimension is thus inconsistent with the *Naturphilosophie* project.

Another significant problem that arises with the *Naturphilosophie* is due to Schelling’s Spinozistic tendency. That is to say, without a doctrine of individual responsibility, then there can be no real distinction between good and evil. The consequences of this for environmentalism is that without conceptions of good or evil then one cannot form imperatives to care for and maintain the environment for its own

³⁰ Steigerward, “Epistemologies of Rupture: The Problem of Nature in Schelling’s Philosophy,” 553.

³¹ Dunham, J., Grant, I.H. and Watson, S. *Idealism: The History of a Philosophy* (Durham: Acumen, 2011), 138.

sake. This is problematic given our current global ecological crisis, and moreover as it lends support for a utilitarian argument for environmentalism that can be situated within anthropocentric attitudes. That is to say, if good and evil are not distinct kinds of being, then the only imperative one may be inclined to take up is to not destroy the environment insofar as it is not beneficial for oneself to do so. This thesis will reject this anthropocentric trait and cast it as characteristic of Schellingian evil. As such, this critique of Schelling's *Naturphilosophie* and its Spinozistic influence provides an entrance into why Schelling ultimately moves away from Spinoza in the *Freiheitsschrift* and further how Schelling reconfigures his ontology of nature in that text though the influence of Böhme.

With this in mind, I will now turn to Wirth's commentary on extinction to further emphasise the inadequacy of the *Naturphilosophie's* ability to address environmental questions. Wirth states the standard view that:

“Although it is still a matter of some debate, the acceleration of global temperatures and the burgeoning climate emergency due to the increasingly industrial character of human life, the widespread destruction of nonhuman habitats, the alarming rate of rain forest devastation, the unchecked population explosion, and the general degradation of the earth and its resources, is precipitating a sixth [mass extinction].”³²

Otherwise put, our activity is a significant influence on how nature is naturing, and its capacity to do so in the future. The *Naturphilosophie's* inadequacy to understand this is due to its lack of recognition of individuality. Rather, it is required that “the community that is nature, a terrible belonging together, is a strange *one* – in no way to be construed as one thing or being – expressing itself as the irreducibly singular

³² Jason Wirth. *Schelling's Practice of the Wild: Time, Art, Imagination* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2015), 3.

proliferation of the *many*.”³³ The *Naturphilosophie* cannot respond to environmental questions as it does not permit nature to be formed of many, but only as one – of the infinite unconditioned activity of nature.

However, we ought to be cautious in how we understand the human in relation to nature. If we stray too far and consider the human as a force over and above nature, then we lose our belonging to nature. A dichotomy opens separating us from the world. As Wirth notes, “the ascendancy of the Anthropocene Age is widely but erroneously celebrated as the triumph of culture over nature.”³⁴ It is erroneous insofar as it presupposes the human as other to nature, rather than a unique aspect of nature, and further implies that we are no longer dependent upon nature. As if in some way we are not ourselves a part of the fabric of nature, and not active within it. I will argue that the relationship of human to nature is critical for how evil is constituted in the *Freiheitsschrift*, and how this in turn supports the interpretation of Schellingian evil as anthropocentrism to be useful for considering environmental ethics.

With that in mind and despite the *Naturphilosophie*’s issues, humans are parts of nature and grounded within it, with the problematic caveat that they are only ‘apparent’. Thus, within the *Naturphilosophie* framework, it is arguable that the Anthropocene age is itself nature’s activity. This is deeply problematic insofar as it indicates how the *Naturphilosophie* cannot distinguish between the activity of nature as such, and those products that arise only due to the activity of an aspect of nature, the human being. On this account, neither the Technosphere nor Accelerationism pose even a remote threat to the environment as the *Naturphilosophie* would merely consider these

³³ *Ibid*, 5.

³⁴ *Ibid*, 5.

developments as within the process of *natura naturans* producing and destroying its *naturata* in order to give way to novel manifestations. That being said, it is necessary that we consider the human as nature if we are to address environmental concerns. If we do not, and consider the human being as having superior status to nature then “even when one is *in* nature, one is more fundamentally opposed to it, cut off from it, which is the condition of possibility for either gazing *at* it or acting ruinously *against* it.”³⁵ This emphasises how, if we are to tackle environmental issues, then we must understand the human to be natural. Yet, *just in what sense is crucial*. Not as a distant reflexive being that can survey nature, as the tendency to do so and drastically terraform is an indication that the human considers themselves to be more so, or superior to nature. Nor, as I will return to, should the idea of the human be indistinguishable from other natural beings, as this can lead to equally problematic consequences for thinking about the Anthropocene.³⁶ I will return to how we ought to think of the human in relation to nature throughout this project, as it is pivotal for how I argue evil is constituted in the world.

Moreover, Wirth’s discussion of extinction raises the compelling argument that the upcoming mass extinction is the horizon of the limitation of the possibility of birth. “It remains not merely an acceleration of death, but more fundamentally a murderous rampage against nature’s natality and hence against its biodiversity (the death of a species is the death of its mode of birth.)”³⁷ Differently put, the extinction of species and alterations to ecosystems is in itself an elimination of possibilities. The possibility of nature’s activity to manifest itself is altered. The net pool of possible creatures

³⁵ *Ibid*, 9.

³⁶ See S3.5.

³⁷ *Ibid*, 7.

shrinks, and the proliferation of species is cut off. In the *Naturphilosophie's* terms, it is the inhibition of nature's activity to create novel beings. The absolute product that *always becomes and never is*, is itself altered.³⁸ As a consequence of human action, the powers of nature change which in turn limits our actions. This point will be returned to later, when I have further developed arguments pertaining to the *Freiheitsschrift* and environmental ethics. For now, let us summarise how the *Naturphilosophie* is both inadequate yet useful as a basis for considering the environment.

I have characterised nature in the *First Outline* and *Ideas* as endless activity, being continually made anew, and forming 'apparent products'. It is thus understood to be both *natura naturans* and *natura naturata*. I examined how this Spinozistic tendency in the *First Outline* in particular is problematic as the identity of nature as unconditioned activity, and merely 'apparent' manifestations is unable to recognise these as individuals which are known in their peculiarity. All activity is the activity of one infinite power, not of many individuals. Thus, it does not provide us with the tools to build up a sense of responsibility that is required when asking questions regarding environmental issues. I rejected the notion that one may object to having responsibility by invoking that nature just natures and the disasters of human driven climate change cannot be attributed to us. I argued that this is an appeal to nature wanting to, or allowing something, which implies personality and responsibility within nature's activity. I argued this is misplaced. Further, the *Naturphilosophie* is inadequate as it has no means to understand the limitation of the possibility of birth and death outlined by Wirth. In a

³⁸ For instance, on this account it would be possible to argue that the rapid decline of 'organic' spaces and the replacement of this by human engineered technology is itself part of nature's infinite activity. What this position overlooks however, is the precise character of this technology and how it is formed by and for only human consumption. Therefore, the problem of the *Naturphilosophie* is that it cannot distinguish between kinds of activity and attribute them to anything in particular.

word, the *Naturphilosophie* is inadequate because it has no individuals. With no account of individuals comes no possible account of responsibility. Without responsibility, we have no impetus to deal with environmental crises arising by means of our actions.

Yet, this does not mean we ought to overlook this conception of nature, and neither did Schelling. Rather, this basis of understanding the activity of nature leads to Schelling's reconceptualization of grounding in the *Freiheitsschrift* with the crucial change that individuals are recognisable. I will make this argument in S2. What remains significant in the *Naturphilosophie* is that by reconstructing causation without a linear structure, we can understand how ecosystems interact with one another, that actions of natural beings become tangled up and how different aspects of the world are interconnected and engaged with one another. For instance, how weather systems and the land are mutually impacting one another, or, that human urbanisation means that 'wildlife' must alter its activities. This notion of causality emphasises a shared sense of interconnectedness between all activities, and that even if humans create industrial spaces, there is malleability to a degree to push back and change itself. The very environment is active too. That is not to suggest we ought to do as we wish, and our environment will simply change around us, but rather, to recognise the activity that exists outside of the human sphere and to respectfully acknowledge this activity *in its own right*.

Schelling's *Naturphilosophie* cannot characterise activity in such a way, however it does conceptualise nature as essentially active. In doing so it is a basis that can be built upon in order to approach environmental questions, as it understands the world as active, creative and as continually becoming anew. As Wirth notes, "Schelling

was a philosopher [...] of the eternal beginning.”³⁹ This is the core of the *Naturphilosophie*, and though by itself it remains inadequate, it provides a starting point. A point at which, when supplemented with true individuality, can provide the means to think about environmental issues in a nature that is active. It is the *Freiheitsschrift* that allows us to do so, and to which we shall now turn.

³⁹ Jason M Wirth. *The Conspiracy of Life: Meditations on Schelling and His Time* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003), 36.

Section Two: The *Freiheitsschrift*'s Metaphysics, Identity and Böhme.

I will now investigate the metaphysics of the *Freiheitsschrift*. They provide the framework for Schelling's conception of evil, and further, demonstrate how Schelling's philosophy is not restricted to an interest in humanity alone. In so doing, I will examine Schelling's recognition that a system cannot be either one-sidedly realistic nor idealistic and argue this through his discussion of Spinozism. I will outline the law of identity as antecedent and consequent which Schelling terms the "profound logic of the ancients."⁴⁰ Then, I will address the Böhman character of the *Freiheitsschrift*, that ought not be overstated yet equally cannot remain unrecognised.⁴¹ For, it is precisely Schelling's combination of both the law of identity and the thought of Böhme that allows for his account of evil that I will then interpret as anthropocentrism. Moreover, it is just this that allows Schelling to move beyond the *First Outline* and *Ideas* as individuals can be recognised in their own right, whilst still retaining dependence on others.

In the *Freiheitsschrift*'s introduction Schelling claims that in the *Naturphilosophie*, "the expressed intention of his efforts was a mutual interpenetration of realism and idealism."⁴² However, we saw how this was unsuccessful as Schelling could not account for the relationship between beings and activity without leaving the beings wholly subsumed within the infinite activity. It is within the *Freiheitsschrift* that

⁴⁰ Schelling. *Philosophical Inquiries into the Nature of Human Freedom*, 14.

⁴¹ Despite Schelling not mentioning Böhme in the *Freiheitsschrift*, the influence of the Böhme cannot be ignored. In this section I will examine how he nonetheless, 'borrows extensively from the mystic'. Paola Mayer, *Jena Romanticism and Its Appropriation of Jakob Böhme: Theosophy, Hagiography, Literature* (London: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1999), 186.

⁴² Schelling. *Philosophical Inquiries into the Nature of Human Freedom*, 23.

Schelling achieves this union, as “mere idealism is therefore not adequate to show the specific differentia, i.e. the precise distinctiveness of human freedom.”⁴³ As S3 will show, it is within the humans’ capacity for good and evil that Schelling is able to unite the real and ideal. As Snow notes, “Idealism provides a concept of freedom which remains too formal and abstract. In other words, it is a concept of freedom which still does not reflect the ambiguous essence of human experience.”⁴⁴ What then is the required framework needed to achieve this?

Firstly, Schelling’s thought begins with “a declaration of allegiance to pantheism properly understood.”⁴⁵ To clarify, pantheism for Schelling extends beyond Spinozism. In the *Freiheitsschrift*, Schelling offers a charitable reading of Spinoza and does so in order to emphasise the crucial insights of Spinozistic thought whilst rejecting what he finds problematic. As such, Schelling argues that “if pantheism meant nothing but the doctrine of the immanence of all things in God, every rational view would have to adhere to this teaching in some sense or other. *But just in what sense is the crucial question here.*”⁴⁶ That is, all rational systems that proposit themselves to be complete would be pantheistic if this were understood as merely following an identification of everything with the Absolute, even if this is cast as Reason. As, the identification of all things with God becomes a closed system if the identification is reduced to mere sameness or necessary relation. Every aspect is necessarily related to all others. In other words, the principle of sufficient reason always obtains within a rational system and thus there is nothing outside of the system. All is then immanent to the system.

⁴³ *Ibid*, 25.

⁴⁴ Dale E. Snow. *Schelling and the End of Idealism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), 157.

⁴⁵ Mayer, *Jena Romanticism and Its Appropriation of Jakob Böhme: Theosophy, Hagiography, Literature*, 209.

⁴⁶ Schelling. *Philosophical Inquiries into the Nature of Human Freedom*, 10, my emphasis.

Significantly, the question is in what *way* are they conceived of in relation to God or the Absolute? An entrance into how Schelling formulates his metaphysics is provided by means of his discussion of Spinozism. Schelling ultimately rejects Spinozism as it is a “one-sidedly realistic system”⁴⁷, and announces that, “the error of his system is by no means due to the fact that he posits *all things in God*, but to the fact that they are *things* – to the abstract conception of the world and its creatures, indeed of eternal Substance itself, which is also a thing for him.”⁴⁸

Otherwise put, the problem identified with Spinozism is that it only accounts for Substance, and is constrained by its mechanism. Thus, there is no freedom within Spinozism as everything including God is cast as necessary and existent. This is troubling as it leaves no room for freedom, even within God. Leibniz critiques Spinoza insofar as he “appears to have explicitly taught a blind necessity [...] he teaches that all things exist through the necessity of the divine nature, without any act of choice by God.”⁴⁹ On the Leibnizian account, the issue with Spinozism is precisely that everything is causally dependent, and even God is caught up in this order of necessity. Leibniz fails to recognise that God is that which everything is dependent upon, yet itself is independent as he equates identification with sameness. However, his insight into the lack of personality or choice of God is an assertion that holds given that Spinoza’s God remains an abstract eternal Substance without freedom in itself. Schelling recognises this problem with Spinoza, and understands God as living in the *Freiheitsschrift* through the influence of Böhme. Further, Schelling does not agree outright with the assumption that all beings are identified with God in *any* of its formulations, as the idea of a derived

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 23.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, 22.

⁴⁹ G W Leibniz, *Theodicy*, trans E Huggard (Illinois: Open Court, 1985), 234.

God made of all beings can never be God and attributes this to “the general misunderstanding of the law of identity.”⁵⁰ God must retain a character in itself that cannot be comprised of its consequences. However, Schelling acknowledges that pantheism as a system of derivation from God can aid an understanding of the relationship of the infinite to the finite. As, from this position it is possible to state that “God is that which is in itself and conceived solely through itself; whereas the finite necessarily exists in another being and can only be conceived with reference to it.”⁵¹ In other words, in Schelling’s reading of Spinoza, God alone is truly independent, and all else retains a dependency to God. This is explained within the formulation of the infinite as A, and the consequence of this as A/a. What is positive in A/a is A. That is, what is positive within the consequence is that it is in a relationship with A, the infinite.⁵² This resembles what Schelling later indicates as the positivity in evil, insofar as what is positive in evil is the good which evil is dependent upon to be a real possibility. Thus, Schelling takes forth this aspect of Spinozism with the law of identity to form the framework of the *Freiheitsschrift*.

The law of identity that Schelling affirms is of antecedent and consequent, which is “of an intrinsically creative kind.”⁵³ This relationship can also be recognised as “the unexpressed and the expressed (*implicitum et explicitum*).”⁵⁴ As such, a statement of identity reveals that it cannot be the repetition of the same. Even within a seemingly tautological statement such as A=A, Schelling claims that something different is being stated in A as antecedent and A as consequent. This is achieved through the ‘=’, or

⁵⁰ Schelling. *Philosophical Inquiries into the Nature of Human Freedom*, 13.

⁵¹ *Ibid*, 12.

⁵² “If we let infinite Substance = A, and infinite Substance regarded in one of its consequences = A/a; then that which is positive in A/a is, indeed, A.” *Ibid*, 16.

⁵³ *Ibid*, 18.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 14.

copula, that distinguishes a difference on either side of the equation whilst acknowledging the unity of the terms. As Heidegger clarifies, “from the very beginning, the “is” does not mean identicalness. Identity is the unity of the belonging together of what is different.”⁵⁵ Thus, the law of identity holds what Schelling interprets from Spinozism; that the antecedent differs from the consequent so that $A=A$ rather denotes that A/a . That is not to say that this position is Spinoza’s own, but rather that Schelling reads Spinoza with this understanding of identity. This in part allows Schelling to develop the law of identity within the *Freiheitsschrift*.

Yet, Schelling’s law of identity is not strictly Spinozistic. Rather, the relationship of antecedent and consequent is one of reciprocal dependency. For it is only when the consequent comes into being that the antecedent *is acknowledged as the antecedent*. Assiter’s metaphor of birth emphasises this characteristic insofar as “the process of birthing outlines the generative nature of the ground, which [...] becomes a ground at the point at which it brings into being its consequent.”⁵⁶ The antecedent, or ground, becomes such just when it has a consequent. Prior to this it cannot be recognised as the antecedent. Following Assiter’s birthing metaphor, the relationship of antecedent and consequent can be expressed in terms of a mother and her child. The mother only becomes a mother at the point of conception. The child leads to the identification of the mother as a mother. Furthermore, the child as consequent is dependent upon her mother for her existence. In a similar manner, the mother is dependent upon the child to be a mother. This demonstrates a crucial aspect of the law of identity, it operates in two ways. As Žižek summarises, “the term ‘Ground’ is to be comprehended here in both its

⁵⁵ Martin Heidegger. *Schelling’s Treatise on the Essence of Human Freedom*, trans, Joan Stambaugh (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1985), 87.

⁵⁶ Assiter. *Kierkegaard, Eve and Metaphors of Birth*, 37.

principle senses, 'Ground as the 'firm ground' [...] and Ground as reason-cause (in the sense of the 'principle of sufficient reason')."⁵⁷

That is, the mother is both the reason for the child, and the ground (physically) that gives rise to the existent child. Moreover, this illustration exemplifies that "dependence does not exclude autonomy or even freedom."⁵⁸ That is, for the child to be a consequent and thus dependent upon the mother it cannot be the same. There must rather be independence of the child from the mother. For Schelling, "every organic individual, insofar as it has come into being, is dependent upon another organism with respect to its genesis but not at all with regard to its essential being."⁵⁹

Its character must differ from the antecedent for it to be a relationship of dependency. Schelling goes so far to explain that "it would indeed be contradictory if that which is dependent or consequent were not autonomous. There would be dependence without something being dependent, a result without a resultant."⁶⁰ For a relationship of identity to be maintained, there must be a qualitative difference between the two. Moreover, although the consequent is dependent upon the antecedent for its being, so too is the antecedent dependent upon the consequent for its status *as* antecedent. Thus, there is a mutual reciprocity of both dependence and independence between antecedent and consequent, mother and child, or non-human nature and human nature. We depend upon the non-human and it in turn depends upon us.

⁵⁷ Slavoj Žižek, *The Indivisible Remainder: On Schelling and Related Matters* (London: Verso, 1996), 21.

⁵⁸ Schelling, *Philosophical Inquiries into the Nature of Human Freedom*, 18.

⁵⁹ *Ibid*, 18.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 18-9.

Moreover, Schelling is committed to a system of freedom⁶¹ and thus rejects the possibility of a closed system. As such the relationship of antecedent and consequent must falter to secure a system of freedom, with the possibility of break of co-dependency. Thus, there must be an unconditioned that precedes all conditioning so that freedom is possible. The unconditioned ensures that the system is always open, with a non-rational beginning. This guarantees no danger of fatalism, as it limits the extent of necessity and completion. Thus, we find that even within God, or the Absolute there is a split.⁶² A split between “Being insofar as it exists, and Being insofar as it is the mere basis of existence.”⁶³ That is, the Absolute can be understood as both ground and grounded. Yet, crucially, the ground of God despite being containing within God is not herself, and is rather characterised as that which is unconditioned. “The procession of things from God is God’s self-revelation.”⁶⁴ Thus, her consequences reveal her character. And yet, something more remains. Just how is God characterised prior to her self-revelation?⁶⁵ In order to avoid a system, wholly comprehensible to reason, and thus attain a system of freedom, Schelling posits the *Ungrund*, the groundless, the unconditioned. The *Ungrund* precedes all determination and is the *x* which lies behind each statement of identity. As the undifferentiated, it has no attributes of its own, and cannot be called forth to answer to reason or system. Moreover, and crucially, the

⁶¹ “If it [freedom] has any reality at all it cannot be a merely subordinate or incidental conception but must be one of the dominant central points of the system.” *Ibid*, 7.

⁶² For this thesis, the term God and Absolute will be treated as synonymous, for the reason that both terms refer to that Being which is unconditioned and ultimate in the sense of being both its own ground, and existence. Despite the influence of Christianity within Schellingian thought which cannot be denied, the use of Absolute makes the discourse more inclusive to understandings that extend beyond Christian concepts and therefore may lead to new ways of conceiving the ultimate character of the Absolute.

⁶³ *Ibid*, 31.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, 19.

⁶⁵ A difficulty felt in examining Schelling’s law of identity is that any description of it implies a temporal dimension to the operation, e.g. Prior, before, in consequence. However, it is crucial that the statements relating to the *Ungrund* and God are understood as atemporal. To reiterate, God is split in character between her basis, and her existence and these alone are contained within herself. As they reciprocally imply one another, a temporal ordering of this does not apply.

Ungrund though the basis of God, is not God and retains an independence from God. It is that which lurks in the primordial past of all creation, including God's own history.

As Schelling famously announces;

"This is the incomprehensible basis of reality in things, the irreducible remainder which cannot be resolved into reason by the greatest exertion but always remains in the depths. Out of this which is unreasonable, reason in the true sense is born. Without this preceding gloom, creation would have no reality; darkness is its necessary heritage."⁶⁶

In a word, the irreducible remainder, the *Ungrund*, secures freedom throughout all its consequences as it alone is unconditioned. It is the *groundlessness* of the ground of God, and all that has, does, and will be existing. Creation echoing the *Naturphilosophie* is an activity of creativity, insofar as it has its primordial basis in this dark ground. It can be argued then, that God's self-revelation occurs in her consequents as God's antecedent is the *Ungrund*, contained within God but unknowable. Moreover, as Bruno articulates, "Freedom, in other words, is pantheism's ancestral or immemorial past."⁶⁷ It is so, as it is the unconditioned that is behind all operations of grounding. This Bruno argues, is so that "freedom precedes pantheism as its condition of possibility."⁶⁸ We can understand God as a living God⁶⁹ insofar as she too is born of the *Ungrund*, and that although residing in herself is at the same time other to her. The *Ungrund* differs from the revealed God insofar as it remains the possibility of all possibilities that cannot exist except *as* possibility. However, care must be taken in discussing the *Ungrund* as it is only negatively understood in the *Freiheitsschrift*, as

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, 34.

⁶⁷ Anthony G Bruno. "Schelling on the Possibility of Evil: Rendering Pantheism, Freedom, and Time Consistent." *De Gruyter*, 18, no.1 (2017), 10.

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, 10.

⁶⁹ "God is not a God of the dead but of the living. It is incomprehensible that an all-perfect Being could rejoice in even the most perfect mechanism possible. No matter how one pictures to oneself the procession of creations from God, it can never be a mechanical production, no mere construction or setting up, in which the construct is naught in itself." Schelling. *Philosophical Inquiries into the Nature of Human Freedom*, 19.

that which lacks all predication and cannot be characterised as anything other than sheer groundlessness.⁷⁰ The *Ungrund* alone lacks an antecedent sufficient reason.

The law of identity thus necessitates the *Ungrund*, as the preceding darkness in order that the *Freiheitsschrift* remains a system of freedom. Consider the law of identity without the *Ungrund*. In this circumstance, every existent (consequence) can be understood through its antecedent, both as a ‘firm ground’ and as the reason for its existence. Even though the antecedent is such only with the consequent, there is a necessary connection affirmed between the two. Further, even if the consequent’s being is contingent, it can still be understood to be necessarily related to its antecedent insofar as it is born from it. Returning to the parent metaphor, even if the mother need not necessarily have the child, and nothing within her determines this, *that* the child is, creates a relationship of necessity between the mother and child. In other words, necessity need not be projected forward, but can be obtained through a tracing backward of grounds. Thus, if the *Ungrund* did not stand as the *x* without ground, then all that is, has been and can be, is traced back to the first ground in a rational manner. Therefore, the first ground, the ungrounded, secures the system as open as it is itself unconditioned. There is something that necessarily lies outside of the system, as the *Ungrund* cannot be comprehended by the system. In this manner, the *Ungrund* is paradoxically necessary to secure freedom. It is paradoxical insofar as for a system to be open, it necessarily requires a radically free and unconditioned element. I will return to examine how the *Ungrund* affects the application of the environmental ethics of deep ecology⁷¹, and it

⁷⁰ As Bhatti concisely states, “this freedom as boundless is beyond thought, and any attempt to conceptualise this “conceptless” notion does not do justice to complete freedom. Admittedly, as serving the very notion of complete freedom goes against the very purpose and scope of that to which the notion refers.” Yashua Bhatti. “Schelling’s Nonconceptual Grounding”. *The Review of Metaphysics*, No. 67 (2014): 558.

⁷¹ For S4, see page 58.

will be articulated how the *Ungrund* is related to what could be considered as Good within the *Freiheitsschrift* in S3.3.⁷²

With this in mind, I will now discuss Böhme, as “much of the expressive language in the *Freedom* essay derives from the mystical striving of Jacob Böhme.”⁷³ To be precise, I will consider three aspects of Schelling in relation to Böhme: how the language of the *Freiheitsschrift* is Böhman; how Schelling’s *Ungrund* bares resemblance to Böhme’s *centrum naturae*⁷⁴, and further how Böhme’s thought furnishes Schelling’s formal conception of the law of identity to allow his conception of evil.

Prima facie, the language of the *Freiheitsschrift* is a continuation of the *Naturphilosophie*. There is the contrast of dark/light, contraction/expansion, gravity/light, particular/universal. Yet, there is a radical change in Schelling’s thought with the *Freiheitsschrift*. Schelling tells us this explicitly within the Preface as he asserts that until now he has not discussed “freedom of the will, good and evil, personality etc.”⁷⁵ In other words, Schelling admits that, for example in the *Ideas* and *First Outline*, he made no attempt at forming an ethics or account of individuals. Therefore, although the set of oppositions used prior to the *Freiheitsschrift* appear again, there is a new direction to Schelling’s work and these concepts must now be examined in that new light. As McGrath comments, “the Böhman distinction between a contractive, wrathful dark principle and an expansive, loving light principle is the paradigm for Schelling’s

⁷² For S3, see page 37.

⁷³ Jason M Wirth. *Schelling Now* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005), 92.

⁷⁴ “Above all, what Schelling wants is the notion of a dark core in the divinity which is yet not God [...] Böhme’s *centrum naturae*/*Grund* provide him with just such a concept.” Mayer, *Jena Romanticism and Its Appropriation of Jakob Böhme: Theosophy, Hagiography Literature*, 201.

⁷⁵ Schelling. *Philosophical Inquiries into the Nature of Human Freedom*, 4.

distinction between “ground” and “existence”.⁷⁶ This demonstrates how Schelling’s thought of identity is furnished with Böhman notions in the *Freiheitsschrift*. Thus, despite the language remaining close to Schelling’s previous works, the *Freiheitsschrift* imports new meanings to these words derived from Böhme. This shift comes as Schelling focuses on the ideas in the Preface which he is yet to speak of; of freedom and personality.

For Mayer, Schelling takes up the Böhman notion of a divinity that “makes it possible to derive the finite from the infinite whilst preserving the immanence of the former in the latter.”⁷⁷ The Böhman notion of a God that has its own life as coming to be in revelation is thus combined with the Spinozistic derivative God to seal the connection between God and consequents. Of particular interest for both Schelling and Böhme is how this living God relates to the human. For it is Schelling’s central concern in the *Freiheitsschrift* to articulate freedom in real terms, which is achieved through “the most concrete expression of the tension within a living, acting and suffering person between Good and Evil.”⁷⁸ This concern is for Böhme “the only issue, one that drove Böhme to overhaul conventional understandings of not only God, but of the nature of the human being.”⁷⁹ The *Freiheitsschrift* does just this. It is then Schelling’s uptake of Böhman thought, alongside the logical framework of the law of identity that gives Schelling the ground to build up his conception of evil which is the focus of this thesis.

Schelling’s use of dark and light in a Böhman fashion will be examined in S3 in relation to the human being, as it is within this context that the similarities can be

⁷⁶ McGrath, *The Dark Ground of Spirit*, 45.

⁷⁷ Mayer, *Jena Romanticism and Its Appropriation of Jakob Böhme: Theosophy, Hagiography, Literature*, 199.

⁷⁸ Žizek, *The Indivisible Remainder: On Schelling and Related Matters*, 17.

⁷⁹ McGrath, *The Dark Ground of Spirit*, 10.

clarified.⁸⁰ For now, I will explore how Schelling's *Ungrund* has Böhman roots. In Böhme's writing, there is a dark aspect within God. As with Schelling's *Ungrund* it is "the original undifferentiated oneness, devoid of all predicates and unaware of itself."⁸¹ In other words, the dark basis of Böhme's God is an unconscious activity that precedes self-generation and the revelation of God herself. The language of the *Freiheitsschrift* bares striking resemblance to Böhme, insofar as Böhme speaks of "the initial impulse to generation comes from a longing for self-awareness in the original undifferentiated oneness"⁸². In Schelling, we find the claim that, "it is the longing which the eternal One feels to give birth to itself. This is not the One itself, but is co-eternal with it. This longing seeks to give birth to God, i.e. the unfathomable unity, but to this extent it has not yet the unity in its own self."⁸³ Thus, it is evident that despite Schelling not acknowledging Böhme in his work, he nonetheless utilises his ideas to articulate his own metaphysics and conception of evil. Further, Schelling acknowledges Baader, who explicitly derives his notion of evil from Böhme. Thus, implicit within Schelling's confirmation that his concept of evil is drawn from Baader is the confession that it is a Böhman concept of evil. This 'initial impulse', or the longing which 'is not the One itself, but is co-eternal with it', is precisely the *Ungrund*. The unconditioned, lacking all predicates is both within God, and yet not God at the same time. Simply put, it is the basis of God's possibility of self-revelation.

Böhme speaks of precisely this self-revelation of God in natural beings. The becoming of nature, and beings is the revelation of the *Ungrund*, or *Centrum Naturae*.

⁸⁰ For S3, see page 37.

⁸¹ Mayer, *Jena Romanticism and Its Appropriation of Jakob Böhme: Theosophy, Hagiography, Literature*, 203.

⁸² *Ibid*, 200.

⁸³ Schelling. *Philosophical Inquiries into the Nature of Human Freedom*, 34.

As, “creation is nothing else but a revelation of the all-essential, unfathomable God, and whatever exists in His own eternal evolution, which is without a beginning, is also in that creation. *But the latter is in regard to God what an apple that grows upon a tree is to the tree.*”⁸⁴ In other words, the becoming of nature, and natural beings are the revelation of the *Ungrund*, the ‘unfathomable God’. This God insofar as it has no predicates, is without beginning and therefore eternal for Böhme. Created beings thus differ insofar as they have predication including a temporal beginning. What is striking here, is how Schelling’s law of identity between antecedent and consequent resembles this relationship as the unfathomable God is the antecedent for the becoming of all creation. Yet, it is not a knowable antecedent but rather is the *Ungrund* itself. In such a way, the proximity of Schelling’s thought to Böhme is evident. Furthermore, we can notice how Böhme draws the similarity between God and created beings to that of an apple and a tree, is another form of the metaphor of mother (tree) and child (apple) that I used to illustrate the relationship between antecedent and consequent. In *Aurora*, Böhme returns to this relationship between God and created beings with the maternal metaphor, expressing that “as long as she [the mother] contains the seed [child] as such, it belongs to herself, but when it becomes a child then is the seed not hers, but it is the property of the child.”⁸⁵ Recalling Schelling’s claim that dependence implies autonomy, it is arguable how this too resonates with Böhman thought insofar as Böhme too calls upon recognising the character of the consequent [seed] as her own, despite her existence being dependent upon the mother. Therefore, the metaphor of birthing is significant within both Schelling’s *Freiheitsschrift* and Böhme’s considerations of

⁸⁴ Paraphrased passage from Böhme’s *Signature*, xvi.i, within; Franz Hartmann. *The Life and the Doctrines of Jacob Boehme*. (Middletown: Kshetra Books, 1891), my emphasis.

⁸⁵ Paraphrased passage from Böhme’s *Aurora*, iv.34, within; Hartmann. *The Life and the Doctrines of Jacob Boehme*.

creation. Birth is a metaphor that is used to illustrate the relationship of dependency and independency for both thinkers. Schelling evolves this notion further, however, insofar as he argues that is to a relationship of reciprocal dependency. The antecedent relies on the consequent to be recognised as the antecedent as such.

The influence of Böhme can therefore be understood to have impacted how Schelling articulates the relationship of antecedent and consequent in the *Freiheitsschrift*. I have illustrated this through the metaphor of birth that both thinkers share. Further, as I argue, Schelling furnishes his law of identity with Böhman language and this is explicit with the notion of the *Ungrund*. Schelling's *Ungrund*, indebted to Böhman language is the dark ground, unfathomable, unconditioned and prior to all expression. Schellingian evil has parallels with Böhme's thought as we will see in S3 and S4. As McGrath notes, "following the Kabbalah, Böhme argues that evil is rooted in a creative duality in God: the simplicity of the unground (*Ungrund*) supports a dialectical play of wrath and love, darkness and light, which Boehme describes as two conflicting wills, a self-assertive and a self-diremptive will."⁸⁶ In the examination of Schelling's conception of evil, these conflicting wills of the egotistical self-assertive will, and the altruistic self-diremptive will, will be crucial to understanding what constitutes evil. Moreover, it is essential to the argument I make that evil can be understood as anthropocentrism within Schellingian thought. Suffice to say for now, that it is Schelling's integration of Böhman notions of the divinity that illustrates both the break from what is found within the prior *Naturphilosophie*, and what enables him to move forward with his particular notion of evil. Critically for this project, the

⁸⁶ McGrath, *The Dark Ground of Spirit*, 50.

Ungrund is the crux that secures the argument I will make that Schelling cannot be considered as anthropocentric.

Section Three: The Distinctive Character of the Human Being.

I have now considered the formal aspects of the *Freiheitsschrift* insofar as I have analysed the law of identity and how this is furnished with Böhman thought. Of central importance is the *Ungrund*, structuring Schelling's ontology in a manner that necessitates that all existent being is contingent and ultimately groundless. Now, I will examine how the *Ungrund* is pivotal for Schellingian evil. With this, I will ask the question to which the *Freiheitsschrift's* title is posed: What is the nature of human freedom? Schelling's response is explicit: "the real and vital conception of [human] freedom is that it is a possibility of good and evil."⁸⁷ Human freedom is thus the capacity to be good *and* evil.

To examine this claim further, I will structure this section accordingly. I will begin with a brief comment on the title of the *Freiheitsschrift* and the implications of this for our current enquiry. From here, I will ask what the character of the human being is, namely how are they spirit and how this relates to the formal structure of the *Freiheitsschrift* expressed in the law of identity. Following this, I will offer a reading of the formal character of goodness. This will indicate what evil cannot be and aid the conception of what it means for the human to be spirit. I will then turn to a discussion of Schelling's critiques of evil as privation, emanation and a return to animality. This will demonstrate the questions that Schelling is primarily concerned with in his account of evil, and the influence of Böhme. Following this, I will offer an argument to resolve the ambiguity surrounding hierarchy in the *Freiheitsschrift* that will support the central

⁸⁷ Schelling. *Philosophical Inquiries into the Nature of Human Freedom*, 26.

argument of this thesis and further highlight the problems that Schelling identifies in Leibniz's model of evil as privation. This critique of order and hierarchy is crucial for my investigation and is only presented at the end of this section as it rests upon what is discussed until that point. Therefore, the question of hierarchy ought to be kept in mind throughout this whole section. Thus, what constitutes Schellingian evil will be examined in S4, where I will provide an account of the formal character of evil and offer an original reading of what this looks like within the world.

The full title of the *Freiheitsschrift* is thus; “*Philosophical Inquiries into the Nature of Human Freedom and matters connected therewith.*”⁸⁸ Schelling is thus asking about the precise nature of *human* freedom. The question is not then suggesting that freedom is only limited to the human being, on the contrary Schelling is investigating the kind of freedom particular to humans. Recalling the *Ungrund*, as that which alone is unconditioned, demonstrates that freedom is not exclusive to human beings. Further, at the outset of the text, Schelling articulates that for freedom to have “any reality at all it cannot be a merely subordinate or incidental conception but must be one of the dominant central points of the system.”⁸⁹ Freedom is thus situated within the core and must be found within all aspects of the system to some degree. This is secured by the *Ungrund*, the groundlessness that is the paradoxical anchor of the system. As Bruno notes, “Schelling conceives of freedom as the active ground of nature.”⁹⁰ That is, freedom is maintained by the *Ungrund* and it is not therefore the case that the human is *the* free being. Rather, Schelling's analysis is focused upon *specifically human* freedom.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁹⁰ Bruno. “Schelling on the Possibility of Evil: Rendering Pantheism, Freedom, and Time Consistent,” 8.

Further, as Snow notes, “Schelling’s dynamic philosophy of nature prepared us to recognise the kinship of the preconscious forces in nature with the consciousness of man (itself the product of unconscious forces); thus there are degrees of necessity and freedom in both nature and spirit.”⁹¹ In other words, the *Naturphilosophie*, with which we began this investigation, indicates Schelling’s commitment to removing the dichotomy of nature/spirit and freedom is not excluded from one nor the other. Rather the expressions of freedom can be varied amongst differing beings.⁹² Moreover, the framework of the law of identity illustrates that all beings share a commonality in their grounding. All existent beings are firmly grounded in nature, and on the other hand, as all is ultimately based within the groundless (that which lacks antecedent justification), all beings contain this dual grounding in both materially existent ground and in the dark primordial basis, the *Ungrund*. Therefore, it is crucial that freedom is not conflated with human freedom, and rather close attention is paid to the nuanced character of freedom Schelling is articulating in the *Freiheitsschrift*.

According to Schelling, human beings are the kind of beings that have the capacity for good and evil. This capacity is what it is to be human. The question is thus what about the human makes it have this capacity? As Schelling utilises the notions of dark and light to form his metaphysics, these return in order to articulate the reality of evil. It must therefore be noted how Schelling’s conception of evil is Böhmanian in its understanding of both the human being and the possibility of evil. As Mayer explains, “like Böhme, Schelling insists that evil cannot exist in God, because in God the proper

⁹¹ Snow. *Schelling and the End of Idealism*, 143.

⁹² “Schelling claims that there is freedom in the whole of nature. [...] Nature as a whole manifests some degree of freedom. Even the bacterium can make rudimentary choices. But this kind of freedom is not equivalent to the freedom of human agents that goes along with responsibility for action.” Assiter. *Kierkegaard, Eve and Metaphors of Birth*, 91.

order is incapable of being perverted.”⁹³ Evil then, does not strictly originate in God, but rather only becomes a reality for the human being. The capacity for good and evil is founded in the human being having spirit. This is so for Böhme and Schelling due to the principles of dark and light being separable in humans, as “that unity which is indissoluble in God must be dissoluble in man – and this constitutes the possibility of good and evil.”⁹⁴ In other words, what occurs within the human is their ability to organise *for themselves* the two principles that are otherwise *determined for* other beings. As explained within S2, Schellingian metaphysics relies upon the Böhman notion of the principles of dark and light. To remain concise, the ideas associated with, or which align with each principle are listed in Table 1.0.

Table 1.0 – The Qualities of the Schellingian Two Principles.

The Dark Principle	The Light Principle
Contraction	Expansion
Self-Will	Universal-Will
Inwardness	Outwardness
Particular	Universal
Nature	Reason
Antecedent	Consequent
Real	Ideal

The terms in each column indicate the character of each principle, or notions that are related to them. For instance, the dark principle in the human expresses itself as

⁹³ Mayer, *Jena Romanticism and Its Appropriation of Jakob Böhme: Theosophy, Hagiography, Literature*, 205.

⁹⁴ Schelling, *Philosophical Inquiries into the Nature of Human Freedom*, 39.

a self-will, that we could understand as self-interest for both preservation and fulfilment of wants; a particular being so that the human is an individual of a universal (due to its relationship with the light principle); and that it shares in the dark principle conveys how the human is a natural being, grounded in the material world. On the other hand, the light principle expresses itself as a being of a community or species, that is, it shares a universal-will and interest in others; the light principle is that of order and reason allowing the human to participate in rationality and therefore hold this relation to the ideal. The relation of the principles will guide our discussions of good and evil as they provide the basic pairing of opposites that are present within all that is existent. This supports my claim that the human is only different from other beings due to the way it relates to and organises these principles, not that it has qualities altogether different from all natural beings.

Schelling explores the character of animals and argues that they “can never escape from unity, whereas man can deliberately cut the eternal nexus of forces.”⁹⁵ Differently put, the animal exists harmoniously with the principles whereas human beings can reorder them. As animals reside in the indivisibility of the principles, for them “the unexamined life is the only life.”⁹⁶ The implication of this need not be that humans are therefore ‘higher’ or ‘above’ animals, rather they simply differ in their life-experience and possibilities. Schelling explicitly agrees with Franz von Baader⁹⁷ that humans “can only stand above or beneath animals.”⁹⁸ With the capacity for good and evil, the human is thus never situated like the animal in harmony with itself and world,

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 49.

⁹⁶ Wirth. *Schelling Now*, 86.

⁹⁷ For further reading see: Ernst Benz, *The Mystical Sources of German Romantic Philosophy*, trans B Reynolds and E Paul (Allison Park: Pickwick Publications, 1983); Ramon J. Betanzos. *Baader's Philosophy of Love* (Manz: Passagen Verlag, 1998).

⁹⁸ Schelling. *Philosophical Inquiries into the Nature of Human Freedom*, 49.

it can only be acting either for good or evil. We cannot remain indifferent and do not feel at home.⁹⁹ Whilst on the one hand this makes us capable of goodness, the major caveat is that we too can be evil. Therefore, to conclude that humans are always better than animals due to their ability to reorder the principles implies that evil is not a real threat or problem as it ignores that capacity is for both good *and* evil. Rather, in acknowledging the distinctive character of the human, we can recognise the striking reality of evil's threat which, as Snow indicates "the very possibility of a threat presupposes the existence of something of value to be threatened."¹⁰⁰ That is to say, the human being is capable of threatening not only itself in its evil actions, but also that which is other to it since "one does not act in a vacuum. Schelling's theory of freedom has to acknowledge the peculiarity of what it is to be a human, neither independent nor wholly dependent."¹⁰¹

Contemporary scholars Alderwick and Kosch analyse the atemporal choice of freedom¹⁰² and ask, "what would human freedom need to be like in order to be freedom for good and evil?"¹⁰³ Yet, both do so without giving an explicit account of what evil could look like in the world. Despite this, they are insightful of the character of the *Freiheitsschrift's* human. Alderwick's approach to the question of the agent's atemporal

⁹⁹ Žižek notes Schelling's insight into the character of human experience commenting on the fact that "unable as he [human] is to find a home in nature – that is to say, he is aware that he 'doesn't really belong here [...]' In short, here Schelling provides one of the most forceful formulations of the paradigmatic modern notion of man's radical, constitutive *displacement*, of the lack of his or her 'proper place.'" Žižek, *The Indivisible Remainder: On Schelling and Related Matters*, 58.

¹⁰⁰ Snow, *Schelling and the End of Idealism*, 178.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid*, 168.

¹⁰² The question of an atemporal choice of freedom is beyond the scope of this thesis, however, it is an ambiguous idea within the *Freiheitsschrift*. Both Kosch and Alderwick treat the question of the choice differently, however, both arguments offer strong readings on what the human being are. For a full analysis of the atemporal choice, see: Charlotte Alderwick, "Atemporal Essence and Existential Freedom in Schelling," *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 23, no.1 (2015): 115-137; Kosch, *Freedom and Reason in Kant, Schelling, and Kierkegaard*.

¹⁰³ Kosch, *Freedom and Reason in Kant, Schelling, and Kierkegaard*, 87.

choice hinges on the notion that “essence and form are always coextensive.”¹⁰⁴ That is, an agent's essence and form are reciprocally determined. On Alderwick's reading this is what makes evil possible. As “a consequent (form) is engaged in a creative and reciprocal relationship with its ground (essence), the way that an agent's essence is actualized [...] arises through her creative engagements with the world.”¹⁰⁵ Alderwick's account thus utilises the law of identity to make sense of the atemporal choice involving essence/form as antecedent/consequent with the mutual dependency and independency that we analysed earlier. Strikingly, Alderwick articulates how within the human there is the relationship of ground/existence in terms of their personality.¹⁰⁶ Furthermore, Alderwick emphasises how “the essence of an agent simply necessitates that she must choose.”¹⁰⁷ That is, she is given the capacity for good and evil, though she does not have the choice whether to have the capacity.¹⁰⁸ This notion is supported in Schelling's claim that the human “stands at the dividing line, whatever he chooses will be his act, but he cannot remain in indecision because [...] nothing at all in creation can remain ambiguous.”¹⁰⁹ The defining character of the human is thus to be in this position, with the capacity to and the requirement that in each action they actualise good or evil.

Humanity's ability to rearrange the principles, something God herself cannot do, has led to the reading that humans are superior to other beings. McGrath notes that

¹⁰⁴ Alderwick, “Atemporal Essence and Existential Freedom in Schelling,” 133.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid*, 133.

¹⁰⁶ The essence and form of the agent relate directly to their ground and existence. Insofar as it is the combination of their *thatness* and *whatness* that gives rise to their personality. Further, these determine one another both temporally and atemporally. See: Alderwick, “Atemporal Essence and Existential Freedom in Schelling,” 115-137; Kosch. *Freedom and Reason in Kant, Schelling, and Kierkegaard*.

¹⁰⁷ Alderwick, “Atemporal Essence and Existential Freedom in Schelling,” 134.

¹⁰⁸ Kosch follows this argument in her own article, stating that human beings “can be responsible for how they use their agency, but they cannot be responsible for the fact that they are agents.” Kosch. *Freedom and Reason in Kant, Schelling, and Kierkegaard*, 97.

¹⁰⁹ Schelling. *Philosophical Inquiries into the Nature of Human Freedom*, 50.

as nature is the image of God that is “no mechanism but an evolving, self-moving life, the pinnacle [...] is reached in man.”¹¹⁰ In other words, the human is the top of the hierarchy and closest to God. Žizek shares this sentiment claiming that “only in man, in whom both principles are finally posited as such, ‘things are for real’; in man, for the first time, everything – the fate of the entire universe [...] is truly at stake.”¹¹¹ Žizek is right to recognise that the universe is at stake with humanities capacity for evil, as we have indicated with the threat of evil previously. Nevertheless, premising this upon reality *finally* being reached with humanity implies an end, or that there was no reality prior to the human being.¹¹² I object to the notion that due to the principles being alterable in humans that this therefore implies a hierarchy with the human at the top. Rather, I agree with Snow in his assessment that “the rejection of a hierarchical ordering of Being and the ground of Being [as expressed in the law of identity] is thus closely tied to the rejection of the nature/spirit dichotomy, of which Schelling had long been critical.”¹¹³ That is to say, the law of identity we have examined with the acknowledgment of the reciprocity and non-priority of either Spirit/Matter, Light/Dark indicates that order is present within the *Freiheitsschrift*, though not therefore in a hierarchical manner. Thus, to arrange beings into a hierarchy to explain the human goes against the formal framework of the text itself.

¹¹⁰ McGrath, *The Dark Ground of Spirit*, 5.

¹¹¹ Žizek, *The Indivisible Remainder: On Schelling and Related Matters*, 65.

¹¹² Schelling rejects this notion in *Die Weltalter*, and in the *Freiheitsschrift* with the claim that “we have an earlier revelation than any written one – nature.” Schelling, *Philosophical Inquiries into the Nature of Human Freedom*, 98. See also; Schelling, *The Ages of the World*. Furthermore, for considerations of nature that are not anthropocentric see: Iain H Grant. ‘Everything is primal germ or nothing is: The deep field logic of nature.’ *Symposium: Canadian Journal of Continental Philosophy*, 19, no.1 (2015): 106-124; Iain H Grant. *Philosophies of Nature After Schelling* (London: Continuum Books, 2006).

¹¹³ Snow. *Schelling and the End of Idealism*, 160.

In response to this objection, I will now offer another reading of the relationship of humans to all other beings and to God. To borrow McGrath's term, the human is the 'pinnacle' insofar as they reside at the summit, at a precarious position that in each action they must choose good or evil. In containing the whole principle of dark and that of light, our actions must be either good or evil. For it is not humanity's choice to be ethical beings, even deciding not to act is itself an action. Thus, one can be complicit with good or evil though their inactivity,¹¹⁴ as 'nothing in creation can remain ambiguous.' Therefore, we can read the human being as different from, though not superior to, other beings insofar as they have the capacity for good and evil. That there is a tendency to consider the human as 'better than' other beings, or to posit a hierarchy in order to place the human at the top, is a trait of anthropocentric thinking that I will outline in S4 as what constitutes evil within the *Freiheitsschrift*.¹¹⁵ In so doing, I will argue against Žižek's claim that Schelling is "radically 'anthropocentric'"¹¹⁶ and reject the notion of hierarchy and human superiority within the context of the *Freiheitsschrift*, and the implications this has within our experience of the world.¹¹⁷

Now that we have addressed what the human being is, we will now consider what goodness is.¹¹⁸ Schelling rejects onesided systems in the *Freiheitsschrift* and rather looks to unite the real and ideal. He achieves this through the law of identity and with

¹¹⁴ As noted at the outset of this investigation, it is problematic to universalise all humans as the conversation of complicity is nuanced and requires careful attention. For details, see S4.6.

¹¹⁵ For S4, see page 58.

¹¹⁶ Žižek, *The Indivisible Remainder: On Schelling and Related Matters*, 65.

¹¹⁷ Schelling's corpus is large and divergent. As such, it must be noted that in texts outside the scope of this thesis, Schelling does speak of the human difference in other ways. However, this thesis is primarily focused on the *Freiheitsschrift* and developing an argument for how this text can be supportive of an ecocentric position and understanding what can be gained by interpreting Schelling from this perspective. That Schelling may speak otherwise in later texts is acknowledged, yet beyond the scope of this projects analysis.

¹¹⁸ A full investigation into what goodness is for Schelling within the *Freiheitsschrift* is beyond the bounds of this thesis and deserves a paper dedicated to this question. As such, the following is a reading guided by Schelling's conception of evil in the *Freiheitsschrift* and speculation on my part.

the input of Böhman language and concepts.¹¹⁹ The consequence of this for human freedom is that Schelling therefore does not see either good or evil as only arising from one of the principles and not the other. In other words, to be good is not only to be wholly rational and in connection with the light principle. It is rather more than this. Despite Schelling only formulating an outline of goodness abstractly, I will briefly examine this formal notion of goodness and offer a consideration of what this could look like in human action.

As noted in Table 1.0, the two principles co-operative within humans, and they are different from other beings insofar as they can reorder or reflect upon the principles. In this way, the human is an admixture of those qualities, and can priorities one over the other, which is a possibility only open to humans. With this in mind, Schelling's idea of the good cannot be one which ignores one side of the table. To be good is not therefore to be alike to the light principle and act from reason alone, neglecting one's embodied natural dark ground.¹²⁰ Rather, given the formulation that the human is both dark and light, goodness is the recognition of both active principles. That is, understanding that the principles are reciprocally dependent upon one another and recalling Alderwick, they mutually determine each other. To acknowledge oneself as both a material natural being, who is an individual (dark) and at the same time recognising oneself as a rational being who shares in a universal socially and in body (light) is the beginning of goodness for Schelling.

¹¹⁹ For S2, see page 22.

¹²⁰ Schelling explicitly rejects Leibniz's concept of good and evil in the *Freiheitsschrift*. I will discuss this in full after offering my interpretation of goodness. However, Schelling summarises Leibniz's position as the following and rejects this as a characterisation of goodness due to its oneness and that it disallows evil to be an actuality. "Freedom consists in the mere mastery of the intelligent principle over the desires and inclinations of the senses, and the good is derived from pure reason." Schelling. *Philosophical Inquiries into the Nature of Human Freedom*, 47.

However, this is still insufficient. The dark and light principle also express the relation between the dark *grund* and the light revealed God. In other words, the human, with the principles separated within itself, can recognise its ground not only in the revealed God known after creation, but to *feel*¹²¹ its connection to the *Ungrund*. What appears significant to goodness is the human's relation with the unconditioned basis of reality. As unconditioned, it is unbounded and defies predication.¹²² Yet, there is a sense in which the *Ungrund* can be understood roughly as creative due to its limitless character and that it is the basis of creation. Though it cannot be acknowledged prior to creation, it can be retroactively characterised in light of its consequences.¹²³ Thus, for clarity, it is possible to conceive of goodness as acting *with* the *Ungrund*, sharing within its creative potentiality and doing something new. That is, a good act is one which brings something new forth, whilst acknowledging the balance and interdependency of the light and dark aspects. That this includes acting with the *Ungrund* removes the idea of goodness as just following rules which are prescribed as 'the Good'. It is thus the metaphysical framework of the *Freiheitsschrift* that leads to this characterisation of goodness. With the *Ungrund* posited, goodness becomes a creative pursuit. Significantly, this negates the possibility of goodness being simply working within the whole for the sake of it. To be good is not only to be a particular *of* a universal. For

¹²¹ As S2 demonstrated, the language of longing and feeling in relation to the Absolute is present within the *Freiheitsschrift*. I discussed this in relation to Böhme and the similarity of their language. However, although it exceeds the scope of this thesis, it must be noted that the *Freiheitsschrift* is influenced by the thought of Meister Eckhart, in particular with how this feeling/longing relates to the birth of the Absolute. As Žižek articulates, "Meister Eckhart, according to which God himself is born through man [sic]. Man gives birth to the living God from within himself – that is to say, he accomplishes the passage of the impersonal, anonymous divinity into the personal God." Žižek, *The Indivisible Remainder: On Schelling and Related Matters*, 67.

¹²² "Freedom as boundless is beyond thought, and any attempt to conceptualise this "conceptless" notion does not do justice to complete freedom." Bhatti. "Schelling's Nonconceptual Grounding," 558.

¹²³ "Creation is not an *a priori* necessity but an *a posteriori* fact. In other words, creation is a free act because it is not driven by necessity and because we know it only after the fact that it has occurred, a posteriori." *Ibid*, 556.

Schelling, that is the life of other beings. The human is capable of goodness as they can recognise that they are a particular of a universal, and that their ground is ultimately ungrounded. On this account then a possible example of good action would be to act in an innovative manner whilst being aware that neither the firm ground in nature nor of rationality ought to be prioritised. For instance, the very act of creating philosophy is perhaps a form of the good, and more so if it relates to and has practical implications within the world. Likewise, forming an institution that reorganises already existent systems in order to deal with current environmental, political and social problems without again ignoring the reciprocal dependency of the dark and light aspects could be considered good.¹²⁴ These examples indicate how Schelling differs from Kant. For Kant, the good is the universal whereas for Schelling it is singular. That is to say, for Schelling, one cannot simply be good by doing what is universally beneficial, rather, one must be good in an original and unrepeatable manner. Goodness for Schelling is a creative act, and thus involves the singularity of the actor. For Kant on the other hand, goodness can be achieved by following the moral law, and using the categorical imperative. In S4, we will further develop how Schelling is distinguished from Kant.

To summarise, the notion of goodness which the *Freiheitsschrift* alludes to is one in which the human recognises that they are a natural being, and all that comes with the dark principle, whilst maintaining an awareness of themselves as sharing within the light principle. Further, it is crucial that to be good one acts with the *Ungrund* to be

¹²⁴ Due to Schelling only providing an outline of goodness that can be extricated through a negation of what evil is, it is challenging to offer possible examples of goodness. That being said, the examples that I offer do fit the criteria of recognising the contingent and ultimately creative union of the two principles and how these manifest within the world for humans.

creative and bring about something new. With this interpretation of Schellingian goodness to hand, let us now examine how evil is understood within the *Freiheitsschrift*.

The traditional problem of evil and its possibility is dependent upon the relationship between the finite and infinite. Otherwise put, the problem of evil is one of creator/creature or, ground/existent.¹²⁵ Evil is present in the world and thus requires an explanation of its possibility. For Schelling, there is no doubt as to the reality of evil, and thus, “Schelling takes the human experience of the reality of evil as primary, and asks what sort of God could possibly coexist with our knowledge of evil.”¹²⁶ If human freedom is the capacity for good and evil, then it follows that “if freedom is a power for evil it must have a root independent of God.”¹²⁷ It’s root must be independent otherwise God is responsible for evil. If God is responsible, this contradicts the traditional idea of God as all perfect. Therefore, as we have identified earlier with the law of identity and Böhman influence, God is brought into question by the reality of evil.

With this in mind, before proceeding to examine Schellingian evil in S4, I will first discuss the problems of explaining evil that Schelling outlines in the *Freiheitsschrift*. Critically for Schelling, evil needs to be recognised as a real possibility and a potential action. As such, he rejects negative formulations of evil. Evil is not a privation as if there is nothing positive in evil, or if all actions are different gradations of perfection, then on “this view no antithesis is established, and all evil disappears entirely.”¹²⁸ That is to say, evil is not a power or force in itself, it is rather just a lack of goodness. Schelling’s law of identity supports his rejection of evil as a privation, as it

¹²⁵ “The problem of Evil could then be restated as follows: how is the false unity of Ground and Existence possible?” Žižek, *The Indivisible Remainder: On Schelling and Related Matters*, 64.

¹²⁶ Snow. *Schelling and the End of Idealism*, 150.

¹²⁷ Schelling. *Philosophical Inquiries into the Nature of Human Freedom*, 28.

¹²⁸ *Ibid*, 27.

is dependent upon two forces/powers/principles in a relationship of differentiated unity. If there is no antithesis, then there can be no identity between the terms and further evil is not a threat. Moreover, evil as a lack means human freedom is the capacity to either achieve goodness, or not. Freedom then is only towards one position, and the question thus arises, is this truly freedom?¹²⁹

Schelling offers his rejection of evil as privation through a critique of Leibniz. For Leibniz, evil is dependent upon, and necessitated by the imperfection of all that is not God. As, “in all actions of creatures which imply imperfection, this imperfection consists in a privation and originates in the original limitation of all creatures.”¹³⁰ All created beings are limited insofar as they are not perfect. Only God is perfect. In other words, this original imperfection of all creatures is “due to the fact that God cannot create gods, and therefore any possible creature will inevitably fall short of the fullness of perfection which God possesses.”¹³¹ As originally limited, creatures are infinitely distanced from God. This position allows Leibniz to claim that the root of evil is therefore not found in God, but rather within creatures. By falling short of God’s perfection, they are deprived of infinite goodness. Their fault is their finitude. As finite and limited, they cannot be wholly good and thus evil is possible. Therefore, “the presence of evil is not God’s fault, since it in some cases consists in, and in others is a

¹²⁹ Following Schelling, Kierkegaard argues that a positive account of evil is vital for freedom in the following: Søren Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Anxiety: A Simple Psychologically Orienting Deliberation on the Dogmatic Issue of Hereditary Sin*, trans. Reidar Thomte (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980); Søren Kierkegaard, *The Sickness Unto Death*, trans. A. Hannay (London: Penguin Books, 1989). For an excellent analysis of the relationship between Schellingian, Kantian and Kierkegaardian evil, see; Assiter. *Kierkegaard, Eve and Metaphors of Birth*.

¹³⁰ G. W. Leibniz, Vindication of the Cause of God (Causa Dei Asserta), §§69-70, GP, VI, 449; P. Schrecker and A. M. Schrecker, eds. *Leibniz: Monadology and Other Philosophical Writings* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965), 129.

¹³¹ Michael Latzer, ‘Leibniz’s Conception of Metaphysical Evil’, *Journal of the History of Ideas* 55, No.1 (1994): 1.

consequence of, the inescapable finitude of created being.”¹³² Schelling critiques Leibnizian evil as it cannot explain evil as a positive or real possibility. Evil is only characterised as a deficiency due to their finitude. Whereas, Schelling will argue that finitude is not itself evil, rather, “freedom hinges on man’s finitude.”¹³³ Rather than finitude being evil, it gives rise to the possibility of both good and evil for Schelling. Thus, this contributes to Schelling’s rejection of evil as privation.

Moreover, Leibniz considers there to be two principles within God; Reason and Will. Schelling summarises that “reason yields the principle of evil, though it does not thereby itself become evil [...] it contains in itself the basis for the admission of evil, whereas will is directed only towards the good. This sole possibility was not of God’s making since reason is not its own cause.”¹³⁴ Simply put, reason cannot be self-caused because of the principle of sufficient reason.¹³⁵ Thus, Schelling claims that the distinction of the two principles within God entails that God can only be passively related to reason otherwise God would be active in the possibility of evil. Thus, as reason is a passivity in God, and creatures are necessarily limited, the resulting evil is not an active force or threat. “The evil which could be derived from this exclusively ideal basis turns out to be something merely passive – limitation, insufficiency, deprivation – concepts which are completely at odds with the actual nature of evil.”¹³⁶ Schelling’s rejection of Leibniz is thus at least threefold: Evil is not a deficiency for Schelling as this is not how it is experienced in the world; Schelling rejects the passive

¹³² *Ibid*, 14.

¹³³ Zizek, *The Indivisible Remainder: On Schelling and Related Matters*, 60.

¹³⁴ Schelling. *Philosophical Inquiries into the Nature of Human Freedom*, 43.

¹³⁵ The principle of sufficient reason requires that there is a reason for x. X must have a reason, and to state that reason’s cause is itself is to create a circular argument which cannot account for itself. Thus either, reason is circular and is self-explanative, in which case nothing is said. Or, there is an x without reason, in which case the ground of reason lies outside of itself.

¹³⁶ *Ibid*, 44.

role of God in evil as if God is all perfect, how then is she passive in this respect?; Evil is not a necessary consequence of the finitude of created beings, rather for Schelling, we will see that it is an active possibility that characterises human freedom.

It is not only evil as privation that Schelling critiques. For, if one conceives of the relationship of God and beings as one of emanation, then evil too is not a reality. As, emanation implies the manifestation of what is already contained within God. So, “to have flowed forth from God, things must have already have been in God in some way or other.”¹³⁷ At issue then, is that if evil is a capacity in beings, then evil came forth from God. If evil is emanated from God, then evil is within God. This begs the question of how God can be all perfect if she contains evil. This formulation of evil is thus insufficient for Schelling.

The last critique of evil I will offer relates to evil being characterised as a return to natural being, that is, evil as fulfilling only one’s material desires and urges. Schelling rejects this notion of evil as it is too one sided. Following the *Naturphilosophie* and the law of identity, creatures are both material and ideal. There is no dichotomy of spirit and matter. Moreover, Schelling is in agreement with Baader that, humans “can only stand above or beneath animals.”¹³⁸ As evil is peculiar to human freedom, it cannot be a return to animality as the human cannot be otherwise than a moral being. This is supported by Alderwick and Kosch who identify that the human being does not have the choice to be anything other than a moral agent. With this in mind, to focus solely on one’s appetites and desires is not to return to animality and consequently be evil. This too implies evil is a passivity as it suggests being evil is to be alike to a creature that

¹³⁷ *Ibid*, 29.

¹³⁸ *Ibid*, 49.

exists within the unity of the principles. Critically however, the principles are not harmonious in humans. Within humans the principles that were otherwise undifferentiated in beings are separated. This amounts to the possibility of human freedom as the capacity for good and evil.

Schelling's critiques of evil as privation, emanation, and, as acting in accordance with only one's material being, provide an insight into what Schelling is seeking in his own formulation of evil. Crucially, that evil must be a reality in itself. Schelling uses the analogy of disease to articulate how this is the case.¹³⁹ Further, Schelling is committed to a union of realism and idealism. Realism as the basis of idealism, or otherwise put, there is a dark ground to the light, a darkness of God. Put forth in the *Freiheitsschrift*, "idealism is the soul of philosophy; realism is its body; only the two together constitute a living whole."¹⁴⁰ That is to say, with no radical dualism, good and evil must not be either wholly one nor the other. Only with both the ideal and real active is there good and evil. Evil then is thus a consequence of the activity of the dark *and* light principle that were characterised in Table 1.0.¹⁴¹

Moreover, Schelling recognises that the relationship between creature and creator is critical to how evil is conceived. Schelling notes the importance of the coherency between the reality of evil and its metaphysical possibility. Aware of the failure of the Leibnizian formulation, like Böhme, Schelling restructures the understanding between God and beings to make sense of the possibility of evil. As Mayer indicates, "only in the *Freiheitsschrift* does Schelling break new ground by attempting – with the aid of Böhmist material – to present evil as a form of nonbeing

¹³⁹ See page 66.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 30.

¹⁴¹ For Table 1.0, see page 40.

that is nevertheless a real, active force.”¹⁴² That is, Schelling considers how the fact that evil is a real occurrence in the world depends upon how one conceives of the Absolute. The framework of the law of identity furnished by Böhman concepts provides Schelling with the ability to articulate how evil is a particular possibility for humans, whilst retaining a ground within the Absolute that does not implicate God in the reality of evil. This is achieved through the dynamic character of the Absolute as both the unconditioned *Ungrund* and the revealed God. As Schelling clarifies, “as there is nothing before or outside of God he must contain within himself the ground of his existence.”¹⁴³ The *Ungrund* as the abyss is thus both God and at the same time not God as it is that which is unconditioned. Schellingian evil, it will be clarified, is a question of how the human reorganises these principles which are not displaced in the Absolute. The possibility of evil lies in the human being, nevertheless the possibility of this has its ground in the basis. Only with the separation of the principles in the human does evil attain actuality. Thus, God is not responsible for evil due to this separation that is otherwise not possible except in humans. Moreover, this is supported by the law of identity’s insistence that dependency implies autonomy. In other words, something novel can arise in beings as they are consequences of God. This characteristic is striking, as the human is both independent and dependent, and further, they contain “the whole power of the principle of darkness and, in him too, the whole force of light.”¹⁴⁴ That is, the human is both dependent upon and autonomous from God as *Ungrund* and revealed

¹⁴² Mayer, *Jena Romanticism and Its Appropriation of Jakob Böhme: Theosophy, Hagiography, Literature*, 197.

¹⁴³ Schelling, *Philosophical Inquiries into the Nature of Human Freedom*, 32.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 38.

God. Critically, they too have the capacity to engage with these principles in a different manner to other beings, with the consequence of acting for good and evil.

Prior to expressing what constitutes evil *in concreto* for Schelling, I will now draw attention to an ambiguity that arises during Schelling's critique of Leibniz and his own considerations as to the nature of the human being. That is, it is ambiguous whether Schelling endorses hierarchical ordering of beings in relation to God. This requires attention as the primary concern of this thesis is to argue that anthropocentrism and human superiority generally is an instance of Schellingian evil. Schelling rejects a gradation of greater and lesser perfection in beings explicitly in his critique of Leibniz as this prevents evil from being a reality. However, there are instances in which Schelling seems to support hierarchies of beings. The intention of this analysis is thus to demonstrate that although Schelling may posit an evolution of beings in terms of their qualities and temporal coming into existence, this does not necessitate the attachment of value judgments to such orderings. Moreover, I argue that to confuse the differing kinds of beings with different gradations of value is itself a tendency of the human being that lends itself towards the actualisation of evil.

In the *Freiheitsschrift*, Schelling claims that the creative forces are “released in a graded evolution, and at every stage in the division of forces there is developed out of nature a new being whose soul must be all the more perfect the more differentiatedly it contains what was left undifferentiated in the others.”¹⁴⁵ *Prima facie*, this appears to be a support for a natural order of beings, especially with the mention of *perfection*. However, what is graded is degrees of *division* rather than necessarily implying

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 37.

superiority. In other words, an increase in complexity does not mean a higher value is attached to that being. Even if one insists, and rightly so, that Schelling articulates an evolution in created beings, it does not follow that the human is the most perfect. For, as Schelling states, the *Naturphilosophie*'s task is to "show how each successive process more closely approaches the essence of nature, *until* in the highest division of forces the innermost center is disclosed."¹⁴⁶ That is, beings become more complex, manifesting a larger variety of the *Ungrund*'s potentialities, *until the point is reached in which the powers are separated*. The principles are separated in the human, and thus they are divided between actions of either good or evil. Does this therefore entail that the human is the most perfect? Certainly not. For the human as 'a radically split entity' has the whole force of dark and light. Humans cannot act otherwise than for good or evil. As such, their perfection as goodness is not a given, it must be enacted. It is permissible then that humans are capable of the highest perfection insofar as they can be good. Yet, it does not follow then that they are the most perfect being, as they too can be evil. They reside on either side of animality, as either good or evil, as nothing existent is ambiguous for Schelling.

The result is thus that any notion of hierarchy within Schelling is not a conventional one, insofar as it is not a hierarchy of value but rather one of complexity. Whilst all hierarchies are systems of order, it is not the case that all systems of order are hierarchical, at least in the sense of different grades of value. This reading is supported by Schelling's rejection of Leibnizian evil as privation as this kind of hierarchy is deficient as it leaves evil as an empty concept. Further, humans are beings with the capacity for good and evil. Value judgments of what is good or evil therefore reside

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 37, my emphasis.

within the human sphere and not necessarily outside.¹⁴⁷ If humans organise beings into a hierarchy of value, this is not inherent in the beings themselves but an operation and projection of human freedom onto the *Other*.¹⁴⁸ The question of good and evil is a specifically human one as it concerns their kind of freedom. So moral valuation need not, and as I argue does not occur in itself in that which is other to human. This is a crucial aspect of my argument for reading Schellingian evil within an ecological framework as anthropocentrism. That humans project themselves as superior, and of value against all else is an example of the formal outline of evil Schelling offers in the *Freiheitsschrift*. Further, that this valuation as a form of hierarchy is a product of humanity is supported by Schelling insofar as good and evil pertain to specifically human freedom. Therefore, I argue that it is not the case that Schelling is endorsing a value hierarchy of beings within the *Freiheitsschrift*, and rather mentions of hierarchy are related to levels of complexity that are more closely related to the ideas put forth in the *Naturphilosophie*.¹⁴⁹ With this in mind, let us now turn to analyse Schellingian evil and what this looks like in the world.

¹⁴⁷ As it will be clarified, I am not arguing that value only applies to humans, rather it is part of the way in which we experience the world. With this in mind, it will be argued that value ought not be applied in a gradation, but rather must apply equally amongst all beings. See S4.

¹⁴⁸ By the Other, I refer to all that is not human.

¹⁴⁹ See S1 for the discussion of the *Naturphilosophie*'s nature.

Section Four: Evil, Anthropocentrism and Ecocentrism.

I will now bring together the arguments of this investigation to articulate my reading of Schellingian evil as anthropocentrism and the *Freiheitsschrift* as supporting an ecocentric position. To do so, I will structure this section as follows: a summary of the thesis thus far; a presentation of Schellingian evil with a focus on how it is similar to, yet differentiated from, Kantian radical evil, and how it relates to Böhme and the law of identity; an analysis of anthropocentrism and ecocentrism within environmental philosophy; an examination of the *Ungrund*'s role and how it advocates an ecocentrist stance in the *Freiheitsschrift*; an exploration of the ecofeminist critique of anthropocentrism by Plumwood; and then, I will end this section, with only final remarks to be addressed in the concluding section of the investigation.

Thus far, I have examined the central features of the *Freiheitsschrift*. I examined the law of identity, and how this is furnished with Böhman thought in S2, with particular emphasis on the *Ungrund*. Then, in S3, I analysed the wider discussion of Schelling's interpretation of evil, from the question of what is the human being, through what goodness is and into Schelling's critical observations of other formulations of evil. Moreover, in S3, I dismissed the claim that human freedom is the only kind of freedom. I argued that despite the human characteristic of morality, this does not necessitate that humans are superior. I did so through objecting to Žižek's notion of reality only being such with 'man', leading Žižek to erroneously claim that Schelling is radically anthropocentric.¹⁵⁰ Rather, I offered an alternative reading to remain consistent with a

¹⁵⁰ Žižek. *The Indivisible Remainder: On Schelling and Related Matters*, 14.

notion of differentiated beings whilst avoiding a value hierarchy. That is, I articulated the position that, when we are reading the human as the summit this could be read as their position upon a precipice; always having to define and act for good or evil, falling one side or the other. Moreover, I rejected Schellingian evolution as a value hierarchy and rather argued for different degrees of complexity. Thus, rejecting the view Zizek prescribes to Schelling that there is a “great chain of development as a continuous progression” with “man as the ‘crown of creation’”.¹⁵¹ This is further supported by S1 where I argued that the *First Outline* and *Ideas* are inadequate to address ecological problems due to their limited understanding of identity and lack of individuality.¹⁵² However, what remains critical in the *Naturphilosophie* and continues forth into the *Freiheitsschrift* is the rejection of a onesided system and the centrality of activity. As such, we saw that Schelling rejects passivity in both his *Naturphilosophie* with the “absolute product that always becomes and never is” and in the critique of Leibnizian evil as privation. Therefore, as I now articulate Schellingian evil in the formal sense, the arguments of the previous two sections ought to be kept in mind. I will demonstrate how they lead to what constitutes Schellingian evil, and later in this section, how I argue they suggest this is experienced in the world as anthropocentric action.

The question of what constitutes evil in the *Freiheitsschrift* has already been implied in the preceding sections. However, I will offer an explicit analysis. For it is “against the backdrop of these critical observations, [that] Schelling delineates his own alternative conception – a conception which stresses difference without dualism, and

¹⁵¹ Zizek. *The Indivisible Remainder: On Schelling and Related Matters*, 57.

¹⁵² For S1, see page 6.

unity without monistic sameness.”¹⁵³ It is precisely this conception of a unity of difference expressed in the law of identity that grounds Schelling’s conception of evil whilst avoiding the problems that his ‘critical observations’ noted. The law of identity outlines how nothing can be considered in isolation. For example, as we saw with the rejection of Leibnizian evil, finitude alone is not in itself evil. Being finite is a condition of existence insofar as existing is having determinations and thus being finite. As such, it is when one acts as if they were not finite, as if they were not dependent, that a problem occurs. For “all existence has to be conditioned or limited in order to be personal existence; to set aside these conditions is to no longer be human. In evil actions man attempts to transcend the limitations of finitude, but this is not possible.”¹⁵⁴

A central characteristic of Schellingian evil is thus when humans act as if they are not finite and limited, and instead act as if they are infinite. This can also be expressed in a similar manner, when the human acts not as a particular but rather as if they were the universal. As the human being is comprised of the dark and light principles, it is when one does not distinguish their two kinds of grounding that evil enters. In evil, one forgets their dependency, and that they have a ground independent of themselves. Moreover, they act as if they were the sole ground of themselves, as if they were in the position of God. Their self will thus elevates itself, not to be above the universal will, *but as if it were the universal will*. For, in this situation the self-will of the human, harmonious within creatures, “steps out of its proper relation to the universe and strives to live for itself, disregarding its place within the whole.”¹⁵⁵ Evil then

¹⁵³ Fred Dallmayr. “An end to evil? Philosophical and political reflections”, *International Journal of Philosophy and Religion* 60, No.1/3 (2006): 175.

¹⁵⁴ Snow. *Schelling and the End of Idealism*, 175.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 166.

“consists chiefly in self-glorification and the usurpation of “universal” goodness by particular self-will.”¹⁵⁶ Zizek asks, how is “the emergence of Evil related to this distinction between Ground and Existence?” The answer is found in the law of identity. If evil is the reversal of the principles, then evil consists in a misinterpretation of identity and grounding, in both the sense of *firm* ground and *reason-cause* ground. Otherwise put, evil is the lack of recognition of oneself as both dependent and independent upon and amongst others, including different beings, the revealed God and ultimately the radical Otherness of the *Ungrund*. Despite Zizek’s erroneous anthropocentric reading of the *Freiheitsschrift*, he does identify the characteristic that “the true ‘diabolical’ Evil consists in the contraction of spirit *against* Nature.”¹⁵⁷ The ultimate reversal of the principles involves humanity positioning itself in the place of the Absolute, and acting as if, in its own peculiarity, it is the whole.¹⁵⁸ As nature is often characterised as the ground, and earlier in the *Naturphilosophie*, as continuous creation, evil is the expression of oneself as if it was this ground and owed its very being to nothing else.

The reversal of the principles and prioritising of selfhood supports the “undeniable sense that there is will and desire, not just ignorance or misunderstanding, behind evil acts.”¹⁵⁹ In this way, Schellingian evil is an account not only of the formal structure of evil action but provides a basis for an intentionality guiding evil. In other words, Schellingian evil is active, and actively enacted by individuals. This supports Schelling’s desire to articulate how evil is a real possibility and threat, and his commitment to ensure that this is grounded within his metaphysics. For, “only by

¹⁵⁶ Dallmayr. “An end to evil? Philosophical and political reflections”, 184.

¹⁵⁷ Zizek. *The Indivisible Remainder: On Schelling and Related Matters*, 66.

¹⁵⁸ “But this does not mean that man should put himself in God’s place and see the universe as the object of his will. This would be the ultimate perversity, a complete reversal of the principles.” Snow. *Schelling and the End of Idealism*, 167.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid*, 168.

maintaining the ontological positivity of the possibility of evil, Schelling insists, can the idea of human freedom have any real power.”¹⁶⁰ Otherwise, if freedom is directed only towards goodness, as was the case with Leibniz, then evil becomes nothing more than a movement away from the good and is not an active choice. It is necessary for Schelling that evil is conceived of as an active possibility, otherwise the notion of freedom as a capacity for decision is eliminated. Although this may not be problematic for other kinds of freedom, it is critical for human freedom to be the capacity for good *and* evil.

Now that we are equipped with an outline of Schellingian evil, I will examine how Schelling’s conception of evil is reached through a “radicalization”¹⁶¹ of Kant’s idea of radical evil in *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*.¹⁶² This will provide further insight into what constitutes evil in the *Freiheitsschrift*. For Snow, humanity’s capacity for evil and God’s inability to be evil is reminiscent of Kant’s distinction between the holy will and the good will.¹⁶³ In brief, the Kantian holy will is not unaware of evil, however, it is incorruptible. Whereas, the good will is finite and limited. The good as limited it is corruptible and thus capable of deviating from the moral law in a manner which is not possible for a holy will. Rather, the good will always strives to be alike to the holy will although it cannot achieve this due to its limited nature. Despite the Schellingian human resembling the Kantian good will insofar as they are acknowledged as corruptible, limited and strikingly finite, the Kantian emphasis of humanity as the sole location of evil is problematic. As McGrath notes, “evil is not simply a power of self-destruction original to man, as Kant would have it, it

¹⁶⁰ Drew M Dalton. “On the Possibility of Speculative Ethical Absolutes After Kant.” *Angelaki* 21, no.4. (2016): 166.

¹⁶¹ Žizek. *The Indivisible Remainder: On Schelling and Related Matters*, 61.

¹⁶² Immanuel Kant. *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason, and Other Writings*. Trans, A Wood and G Giovanni (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

¹⁶³ Snow. *Schelling and the End of Idealism*, 164.

is the primal otherness in being for which God himself must be ultimately responsible.”¹⁶⁴ Schellingian evil is grounded within the organizing principles of dark and light and thus grounded outside of the human being. The potential for the *actualisation* of evil is peculiar to the human being, as that being which is capable of freedom as good and evil. However, it is metaphysically grounded in God, insofar as God is split between, without being separated from God grounded in the *Ungrund* and God as the revealed God. Therefore, even with the *Freiheitsschrift*’s human being similar to the Kantian good will, it is distinct insofar as the basis of evil lies outside of the human. Otherwise put, Schellingian evil departs from Kantian evil insofar as for Kant good and evil are “two potentialities which exist innately and exclusively within the borders and operation of human subjectivity,”¹⁶⁵ whereas, “the real roots of Schelling’s account of radical evil fall absolutely beyond the subject, in a potentiality and power which outstrips, and indeed threatens subjectivity.”¹⁶⁶ Differently put, for Schelling the ground of the possibility of good and evil lie outside of the human, however, the actualisation of this possibility is firmly grounded within the human being. For Kant, both possibility and actuality are found within the human with no explanation of their origin outside of human subjectivity.

Moreover, Dalton summarises Kantian radical evil as occurring due to “the elevation of one’s own singular particular interests over the duties testified by rationality.”¹⁶⁷ This results in a “reversal of the ethical order,”¹⁶⁸ insofar as the particular is posited above the universal and the universal will is subordinated to the self-love of

¹⁶⁴ McGrath. *The Dark Ground of Spirit: Schelling and the Unconscious*, 10.

¹⁶⁵ Dalton. “On the Possibility of Speculative Ethical Absolutes After Kant,” 167.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid*, 168.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid*, 167.

¹⁶⁸ Kant. *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason, and Other Writings*, 31.

the individual. The language of Schelling's perversion of the principles is thus reminiscent of Kant's 'reversal of the ethical order' whilst additionally echoing Böhme insofar as it is not an ethical order which is reversed, but rather the very organizing principles of possible existence. Furthermore, in *Religion*, Kant posits that there is a "natural propensity to evil"¹⁶⁹ and that this must be within a free will which is 'morally evil.' This kind of evil is radical insofar as it "corrupts the ground of all maxims"¹⁷⁰ and inverts the moral law. Likewise, it is a "natural propensity, inextirpable by human powers."¹⁷¹ In other words, Kantian radical evil is: 1) Intrinsic to human nature; 2) A natural capacity of the human; 3) A corruption of the moral law. Schellingian evil rejects 1 and 2, and 3 is transfigured from being an abstract moral imperative to be ontologically grounded in the character of reality provided by the relationship of *Ungrund*/ground/existence. As such, Schelling transforms Kantian radical evil by grounding it within a union of realism and idealism, secured by the law of identity and its Böhmanian basis.

Schellingian evil is based within Kantian radical evil, nevertheless, Kant was not Schelling's only influence. Another critical predecessor acknowledged throughout this investigation is Böhme to whom Schelling is undoubtably indebted, particularly in his argument for what constitutes evil. For, although Böhme's thought alters over time, "that evil occurs when self-will becomes uppermost in creatures, that is, when the dark qualities refuse to remain subordinate to divine love and seek to rule in its place"¹⁷² remains consistent throughout. With this in mind, it is Schelling's uptake of Böhme

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid*, 32.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid*, 32.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid*, 32.

¹⁷² Mayer. *Jena Romanticism and Its Appropriation of Jakob Böhme: Theosophy, Hagiography, Literature*, 204.

insofar as Böhme brings the dark principle within the divinity that allows for a reconciliation of “immanence of all in God with the independent existence of evil with human freedom. Böhme’s *centrum naturae/Grund* provide him [Schelling] with just such a concept.”¹⁷³ Therefore, Schelling’s incorporation of Böhme facilitates the capacity to ontologically ground human freedom in its peculiarity as the capacity for good and evil. Moreover, this is achieved through a radicalization of Kantian radical evil that maintains how evil arises from the elevation of self-will into the false identification of itself as if it were the universal. With this in mind, I will now emphasise a few implications of what we have discovered thus far about Schellingian evil which will move us towards the speculative reading of it as anthropocentrism.

Firstly, the reading I will offer shortly of the *Freiheitsschrift* advocating a kind of ecocentrism is supported by Dallmayr’s argument that Schelling departs from Kant and the Enlightenment insofar as he “moved beyond anthropocentric “willing” by embedding the choice of good and evil in a larger ontological reality.”¹⁷⁴ By referencing a ‘larger ontological reality’, Dallmayr directs us to how the dark and light principles, which can be perverted in human action, are the structuring principles of reality *qua* existent beings, grounds and even so far as the *Ungrund*. Thus, evil although remaining a character of the human being is decentralised from the human insofar as the *possibility* of its possibility originates outside of the human. This is further supported by Žižek’s recognition that “Good and Evil are modes of the unity of Ground and Existence.”¹⁷⁵ That is to say, good and evil are intimately related to Schelling’s law of identity. For evil is the perversion of this relation of identity. This conveys not only the consistency

¹⁷³ *Ibid*, 201.

¹⁷⁴ Dallmayr. “An end to evil? Philosophical and political reflections,” 174.

¹⁷⁵ Žižek. *The Indivisible Remainder: On Schelling and Related Matters*, 63.

and coherency of Schelling's thought, but moreover indicates the profound moral character of the law of identity. For it is Schelling's understanding of identity that grounds his ethics and ultimately, it substantiates my claim that the *Freiheitsschrift* can be utilised within environmental philosophy to advocate for ecocentrism. In this way, he moves beyond the *Naturphilosophie* with the law of identity insofar as the dimension of ontology and ethics merge. Even more striking is how the law of identity, viewed in this way, resembles the core characteristic of the recognition of dependency that features within feminist thought, to which we will engage with later in this section.¹⁷⁶ Following the law of identity, as the reciprocity of dependency and independency, freedom in the world means not being fully determined by the exterior nor the interior of oneself.¹⁷⁷ In this sense, good and evil are modes of existence which do not strictly fall into being one-sided in the sense of being either only real/dark, or ideal/light. This is significant for how we conceive of moral responsibility in terms of the environment and as such will be further considered during the discussion of ecofeminism.

I will now analyse the notion of evil as a “willful disorder, a false life”¹⁷⁸ to further articulate what Schellingian evil is and how it features within environmental considerations. Within the *Freiheitsschrift*, Schelling uses the analogy of disease to explain the nature of evil due to its craving to be for itself and forgetting its dependency on that which it is connected with. As Snow explains, “disease is the paradigm case of an entity inappropriately subsuming everything to itself at the expense of the whole of which it is a part.”¹⁷⁹ Thus, evil is a false life as it wills to be for itself with no other and

¹⁷⁶ See S4.6.

¹⁷⁷ “True freedom means not only that I am not fully determined by my surroundings but also that I am not fully determined by myself.” *Ibid*, 71.

¹⁷⁸ Snow. *Schelling and the End of Idealism*, 166.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid*, 166.

yet, in so doing it destroys the otherness that it fails to see it is dependent upon for its very subsistence. Similarly, local disease occurs “only because some entity whose freedom or life exists only so that it may remain in the whole, strives to exist for itself.”¹⁸⁰ Schelling acknowledges Baader as advancing this analogy of evil with disease as Baader articulates how self-will is the “basis, foundation or natural center of every creature’s life.”¹⁸¹ Thus, evil as alike to disease “leads to disorganization within itself and outside of itself.”¹⁸² Significantly, the consequences of evil, as with disease, extend beyond the boundaries of itself. If evil is understood as anthropocentrism, then whilst it does irreparable harm to other humans (within itself) it also endangers the very possibility of life as it is (outside of itself) when it leads to catastrophic ecological disaster. Snow’s argument that Schelling’s imagery of evil is closer to cancer is thus justified insofar as it has “overtones of transforming what had originally been orderly into a fearsome and self-destructive disorder, and thereby at least potentially threatening the integrity of the whole.”¹⁸³

Further to this, despite Žižek oscillating between supporting hierarchies of value, with ‘man’ at the peak and recognising the resonance between evil and a denial of dependency, he nevertheless does articulate what he calls the ‘paradox’ of human existence in relation to the environment in a way which relates to this analogy of disease well and the fragility of human existence. It is the fragile condition of human autonomy as grounded within dependency that is the ‘paradox’. For, Žižek states that:

¹⁸⁰ Schelling. *Philosophical Inquiries into the Nature of Human Freedom*, 42.

¹⁸¹ Moreover, according to Schelling, Baader showed that “as soon as it ceases to be the ministering center and enters as sovereign into the periphery, it burns in it like Tantalus’s malice in its selfishness and egoism.” *Ibid*, 43.

¹⁸² *Ibid*, 41.

¹⁸³ Snow. *Schelling and the End of Idealism*, 166.

“The present threat of a global ecological catastrophe provides the ultimate proof [of the paradox]: the universe of human culture hinges on an unstable balance of our ecosphere; the slightest variation – the depletion of the ozone layer, global warming, not to mention the possibility of a giant comet hitting earth – can sweep the ground from under the feet of the human race, and entail the end of civilization.”¹⁸⁴

With this in mind, I will now turn to consider what Schellingian evil is in terms of environmental philosophy. As “the universalization of self-will, as the prioritization of a singular being over all others, can thus be used to justify any number of evil acts” I will focus upon human action with regard to the environment in order to present my speculative reading of anthropocentrism as embodying the characteristics of Schellingian evil. This is supported by the notion that, Schelling following Böhme, conceptualised evil as “a willing of self in denial of otherness,” which is an “incoherent and unsustainable will.”¹⁸⁵ Evil action is turned toward only itself and acts without regard for the other. It acts as if it were the very center of the universe. If this is so, as I have argued, then, Schellingian evil embodies the core position of anthropocentrism: to value the human for itself above, beyond and to the potential (and often actual) detriment of otherness.

Environmental philosophy distinguishes between two major positions towards the environment: anthropocentrism and ecocentrism. To remain concise, I will use Cocks and Simpson’s¹⁸⁶ understanding of the distinction between these terms within this investigation. Drawing from Casas and Burgess¹⁸⁷, anthropocentrism is stated as “a

¹⁸⁴ Žizek. *The Indivisible Remainder: On Schelling and Related Matters*, 74.

¹⁸⁵ McGrath. *The Dark Ground of Spirit: Schelling and the Unconscious*, 16.

¹⁸⁶ Samuel Cocks and Steven Simpson. ‘Anthropocentric and Ecocentric: An Application of Environmental Philosophy to Outdoor Recreation and Environmental Education.’ *Journal of Experimental Education*, 38, no.3 (2015): 216-227.

¹⁸⁷ A. B Casas and R. A Burgess. ‘The practical importance of philosophical inquiry for environmental professionals: A look at the intrinsic/instrumental value debate.’ *Environmental Practice: Journal of the National Association of Environmental Professionals* 14, no. 3, (2012): 184.

perspective that human beings are the most significant species on the planet, and nature is “valuable only insofar as it is valuable to human beings.”¹⁸⁸ Otherwise put, anthropocentrism is a position that considers humans to be superior to all other beings, and everything is only to be determined by its use value *for* humans. This is the position that I will align with Schellingian evil for reasons that I will make explicit shortly. To contrast this position however is ecocentrism. Again, with reference to Casas and Burgess¹⁸⁹, this position is outlined to be “a perspective that human beings are not the center of the planet’s reason to be, and “the environment is intrinsically valuable.”¹⁹⁰ Simply put, the human is a kind of being that is no more or less valuable than another. Value is not intrinsic within the human alone, and all that is, can be or has been is valuable in its own regard. This is the position that my speculative reading of the *Freiheitsschrift* supports. That is to say, that Schelling can be interpreted in the *Freiheitsschrift* to be advocating a form of ecocentrism. In this way, Schelling is a moral realist, with good and evil being ontologically distinct principles of order. This is demonstrated to be the case within the *Freiheitsschrift* as good and evil are peculiar formulations of ground and existence.

To summarise, ecocentrism does not distinguish between human and non-humans on a value basis, whereas anthropocentrism positions the human as superior to all else. Therefore, according to the ecocentrist, the issue with anthropocentrism is that it “fails to recognise that nature also has value independent of human needs.”¹⁹¹ In

¹⁸⁸ Cocks and Simpson. “Anthropocentric and Ecocentric: An Application of Environmental Philosophy to Outdoor Recreation and Environmental Education,” 217.

¹⁸⁹ Casas and Burgess. “The practical importance of philosophical inquiry for environmental professionals: A look at the intrinsic/instrumental value debate,” 184.

¹⁹⁰ Cocks and Simpson. “Anthropocentric and Ecocentric: An Application of Environmental Philosophy to Outdoor Recreation and Environmental Education,” 218.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid*, 218.

Schellingian evil, one denies the value of the Other independent of itself. The evil action considers itself to be the universal reference point and refuses to acknowledge others. Differently put, the self-will claims itself to be superior to the universal will and reverses the principles. What is parallel between anthropocentrism and Schellingian evil is the denial of not only independency but also dependency. That is, in evil one places themselves *as* the universal, as if their own particularity is ubiquitous. In a similar manner, anthropocentric actions place human interests as the only ones to be considered. Moreover, in evil action one neglects how they are dependent upon the other to be, which we saw most clearly through the analogy of disease. Similarly, when the human treats the world as a resource for itself it neglects to acknowledge that it is dependent upon these ‘resources’ for its own perpetuation. Furthermore, that the environment is often referred to as a ‘natural resource’ is indicative of the anthropocentric character of our thought.

At this point, I will now offer a further distinction which is significant to the arguments of this investigation. That is, the distinction between ‘anthropocentric’ and ‘anthropogenic’. As we have stated, anthropocentrism understands the human as the sole object of value. Whilst Schelling maintains an ontological grounding of good and evil, within environmental philosophy, the act of valuation is sometimes considered anthropogenic, meaning that it is generated by humans.¹⁹² If we consider the argument in S3 against the hierarchical valuation of beings in terms of this position then it is important to distinguish between the following: the creation of a hierarchy of value is *anthropogenic*, whereas, positing the human at the top, or as the only being of value, is

¹⁹² J. B Callicott. “Rolston on intrinsic value: A deconstruction.” *Environmental Ethics* 14. (1992): 129-143.

anthropocentric. Even with Schelling moral realism aside, the argument that Schelling endorses a hierarchy of complexity demonstrates how anthropocentrism is not a necessary premise nor consequence of anthropogenic thinking. In other words, even if one objected to the ontological grounding of value, then the issue does not lie in the human generation of value, rather, the problem arises when this is formulated to serve the interests of humans and refuse the intrinsic value of the Other. For as Hargrove argues, an anthropogenic view can be “nonanthropocentric, rather than anthropocentric, because human valuers value things other than themselves, and it is intrinsic, because human valuers value these other things for their own sakes.”¹⁹³ Therefore, whether this is understood from Schelling’s moral realist position, or that value is anthropogenic, it is possible on both accounts to be ecocentric. that the human being as capable of good and evil values that in which it encounters as good or evil is anthropogenic. However, the human capacity to act for its own interest, for evil’s sake, more closely aligns with the position of anthropocentrism.

Furthermore, in Schellingian evil, a person positions themselves as Lord, and thus sees everything as theirs; one announces that the Other is ‘*mine*’. The term ‘mining’ is used within environmental philosophy to categorise these kinds of attitudes. Mining, not in the literal sense, is the belief that “nature can be owned or possessed.”¹⁹⁴ That is, the disposition of action towards seeing nature as for oneself, as a commodity is attributed to an anthropocentric position. However, it can be pro-environmental if it’s in the name of preservation of National Parks, however more often than not, it is a

¹⁹³ E Hargrove. “Weak anthropocentric intrinsic value”, in A. Light & H. Rolston (Eds.), *Environmental ethics: An anthology* (pp. 175-190), (Malden, MA: Wiley–Blackwell, 2003), 182.

¹⁹⁴ Cocks and Simpson. “Anthropocentric and Ecocentric: An Application of Environmental Philosophy to Outdoor Recreation and Environmental Education,” 223.

“problematic character of thought [which] risks making a number of otherwise sound environmental ways of thinking, unsound”¹⁹⁵ as it lends itself towards anthropocentric thinking. In terms of National Parks this can be seen in the distinction between conservation and preservation. Conservation is situated within anthropocentrism insofar as it is conservation for us, whereas preservation indicates a value *in itself* and thus ecocentrism.¹⁹⁶ Differently put, in recognising the environment as *our* environment is the implicit assumption of ownership and thus a devaluation or neglect of the environment being *for itself* rather than just simply *for us*.

This notion of mining supports my reading of Schellingian evil as anthropocentrism insofar as it maintains the characteristics of evil expressed in the *Freiheitsschrift*. Moreover, it provides an insight into how our actions with regard to what environs us can map against Schellingian evil and good. For instance, in seeing the environment as ‘our natural resource’ for excavating then the recognition of independence from use value is lost. The contradiction of anthropocentrism is that even within this position it is problematic due to the inevitability of the Earth’s ‘resources’ being depleted beyond the possibility of consumption. This demonstrates the similarity to Schellingian evil conveyed through the analogy of disease insofar as the human in this path of action destroys the very whole of which is it dependent upon to have its own autonomy. In destroying what it is dependent upon, it destroys itself. This exemplifies the depth of the problem of both evil and anthropocentrism, as it is eventually fatalist in its own nature. Thus, in evil and anthropocentrism one acts to

¹⁹⁵ J Bates. “An inquiry into the nature of environmentally sound thinking.” *Environmental Ethics* 25, (2003):183.

¹⁹⁶ C. N. Clarke and D. McCool, *Staking out the terrain: Power differentials among natural resource management agencies* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1985).

protect only itself, and in neglecting the Other, it brings about its own demise.¹⁹⁷ This is expressed in the *Freiheitsschrift* insofar as in evil action one reverses the order of the principles to serve only their interests as if it were in the interests of all. Yet, at some point, through self-satisfaction, evil will have nothing more to consume, and thus burn out. It matters not whether this is considered as a singular human in their evil action, or whether this is expanded to represent a collective of humans with this capacity that create a complex ‘larger’ system enacting anthropocentric thought by using the Earth as a ‘resource’ as both lead to the part destroying the whole. It is the self-satisfaction against all else that leads to the devastation of ecosystems that humanity is dependent upon for its own survival, as individuals and as a collective species.

I have offered a speculative reading of Schellingian evil as anthropocentrism, and will now turn to consider how Schellingian good is situated in this account. Thus far, I have argued that it is possible to provide an example of Schellingian evil in the world as a positive action rather than a lack by suggesting that the characteristics of the *Freiheitsschrift*’s evil are reflected in what environmental philosophy calls anthropocentrism. Therefore, considering our actions in the world that are anthropocentric and contribute to the global environmental crisis is one way of articulating how Schellingian evil is a practical and applicable conception of evil. As environmentally destructive behaviour is problematic for the reasons I have outlined

¹⁹⁷ Although it is beyond the scope of this investigation, this argument could potentially be drawn from an analysis of Hegel’s famous Master Slave dialectic. A comparative account of how both Schelling and Hegel can provide insight into the contradictory nature of anthropocentrism and evil is project that would further aid how German Idealism is compatible with, and beneficial to, contemporary environmental philosophy. For Hegel’s Master Slave dialectic, see; G. W. F Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans A.V Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 1977.

and more so, I would like to examine the counter-position and argue how Schellingian good can relate to ecocentrism.

How then can Schellingian good be considered within this environmental context? One response can be found within Norton's claim that "if the real purpose of environmentalism is to act in the best interest of both humankind and nature, weak anthropocentrism combines the best elements of anthropocentrism and ecocentrism to create a substantial common ground."¹⁹⁸ In other words, Norton recognises that environmentalism, as anthropogenic, ought not be in the interests of either only the human, or the reverse, only for 'nature.' Rather, interpreting this within a Schellingian frame, the law of identity proposes the mutual dependence and autonomy of the human and nature. The human is both for itself and grounded in nature. Thus, its interests are grounded in the Other, and thus by valuing the Other (nature) for its own sake, it can continue its own self-interested valuations. In the *Freiheitsschrift*, nature is identified with ground, and thus for humans to reject being grounded in something other than themselves is a rejection of their dependency on nature. If it only values the Other, it risks nullifying or destroying itself. Yet, this is not a relationship of reciprocity, and implies a hierarchy of value, this time with the human as 'lower'. However, I have already expressed how hierarchies are not useful, nor present, in a value sense within the *Freiheitsschrift*, and I will continue this point later in the discussion of ecofeminism.¹⁹⁹ Suffice to say for now that, the reading we have presented so far of the *Freiheitsschrift* does not permit a one-sided position.

¹⁹⁸ B Norton. 'Seeking common ground for environmental change.' *Forum for Applied Research and Public Policy*, no. 10, (1995): 100-102. Quoted within; Cocks and Simpson. "Anthropocentric and Ecocentric: An Application of Environmental Philosophy to Outdoor Recreation and Environmental Education," 219.

¹⁹⁹ See S4.6.

As such, in S3 I argued that goodness is a recognition of the reciprocal dependence and independence of the human and its ground, and ultimately through the awareness of its radically contingent groundless underbelly. In such a way, we can speculate that Schellingian ‘environmental’ good is comprised of acting with the interests of the environment and the human for their own sakes, and creatively forming a way to navigate between these sometimes conflicting interests.²⁰⁰ Moreover, “according to McShane, respect, awe, and love are exclusively ecocentric feelings no matter how broadly anthropocentrism is defined. Respect connotes an equal relationship between humans and the nonhuman world, and awe signifies a greatness that goes beyond humanity.”²⁰¹ These ecocentric feelings resonate with Schellingian goodness as they promote the recognition, respect and acceptance of the Other. Differently put, they exemplify how neither the light nor dark principle ought to reign in isolation. The formal structure of the law of identity articulates how a balance between universal/particular, antecedent/consequent, and *Grund*/God is analogous to the good, and this can therefore be extended into considerations of ecocentrism.

Moreover, Dalton characterises goodness as maintaining and affirming the dynamic tension of the principles of dark/light whilst “fully recognising the testimony of the “indivisible remainder” – that is, hearing and acknowledging the fact that all existence could return to the primal anarchy of the *Ungrund* at any moment.”²⁰² From

²⁰⁰ For a simple local example, in the UK people rely on electricity in order to live their daily lives. The consumption of fossil fuels in order to generate this electricity is inflicting damage upon the environment in numerous ways. As such, to navigate a way to limit this impact whilst still taking people’s lives into account, one can opt to use solar panels (or another ‘Green’ method) to supply electricity to them. This is not without its own problems, however, it is a basic example of how one can change their actions to accommodate the interests of people and all that is not human.

²⁰¹ K. McShane. “Anthropocentrism vs. nonanthropocentrism: Why should we care?” *Environmental Values* 16, (2007): 169-185. Quoted within; Cocks and Simpson. “Anthropocentric and Ecocentric: An Application of Environmental Philosophy to Outdoor Recreation and Environmental Education,” 219.

²⁰² Dalton. “On the Possibility of Speculative Ethical Absolutes After Kant,” 169.

an environmental perspective, Schellingian good is related to recognising the supreme contingency of life and understanding that it ought to be intrinsically valued. This is further supported by Dalton's claims that "evil occurs from the attempt to flee from this reality" and thus "the possibility of the good must be rooted in an affirmation of this reality, alongside an affirmation of the reality of being itself, lived in dynamic relation to itself, and to all other beings."²⁰³ Thus Dalton's assessment further supports my reading of eco- and anthropo-centrism aligning to Schellingian good and evil. Moreover, it supports the position that the arguments of the *Freiheitsschrift* can be used to advocate and support practical arguments in favour of ecocentrism.

The last point I will make regarding the relationship between ecocentrism and Schellingian good is centred on the *Ungrund*. For, I will argue, it is precisely the inclusion of the *Ungrund* within the *Freiheitsschrift* that commits Schelling's thought in this text to be considered ecocentric. Zizek identifies the significance of "why Schelling has to venture into speculations on the *Ungrund* of the Absolute *qua* Primordial Freedom."²⁰⁴ However, he connects this to the apparent impossibility to "account for the emergence of human freedom in the heart of the realm of natural necessity."²⁰⁵ That is, for Zizek, the *Ungrund* saves Schelling from a problem of compatibilism. Whereas, I rather argue that natural necessity is not the issue, since existent nature too is grounded in the *Ungrund* and thereby has degrees of freedom. Rather, the speculation of the *Ungrund* grants the possibility of good and evil within the human, whilst retaining a ground that is other to it. In this way, the *Ungrund* secures a metaphysical ground of the possibility for good and evil, and simultaneously secures

²⁰³ *Ibid*, 169-170.

²⁰⁴ Zizek. *The Indivisible Remainder: On Schelling and Related Matters*, 53.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid*, 53.

the possibility of actualising such a capacity limited to the human. The threat of evil remains profound and the responsibility can be directed to the human rather than deflecting onto the ‘natural’ or the revealed God. In this way, the *Ungrund* is able to secure ethical responsibility in a way which was not achievable in the *Naturphilosophie*. Moreover, it is the *Ungrund* that anchors the support for my reading of Schelling as at least an implicitly ecocentric thinker. For, the *Ungrund* as primal otherness is irreducible to reason and human understanding and yet that which ‘births’ all that is. As such, it forcefully rejects an anthropocentric reality and decentralises the human, bringing to the forefront of both ethical responsibility and ontology the *Otherness* of existence.

Moreover, both Schelling and Böhme introduce the *Ungrund* not to explain freedom *per se*, but rather in order to explain why there is something rather than nothing. The *Ungrund* undergirds the possibility of creation itself. As such, even the manifest revealed God is itself an existent being dependent upon the *Ungrund*, and is thus a natural being. In this way, nature in its largest sense is the source of all that is. This is the case for both Böhme and Schelling whom write theogonies in order to understand the possibility of creation. The *Freiheitsschrift* is Schelling’s theogony, and as we have demonstrated throughout this project it is vastly influenced by Böhme. Moreover, in writing a theogony and situating the revealed God’s birth within the *Ungrund*, this renders both Schelling and Böhme as ecocentric thinkers, thus further supporting my claim that the *Freiheitsschrift* can be interpreted as advocating an ecocentric position. In other words, that Schelling and Böhme both write theogonies in order to explain why there is something rather than nothing, and do so though positing the birth of God and all that is within the *Ungrund* demonstrates the ecocentric tendency of their thought.

Whilst it must be recognised that neither were concerned with environmentalism in the contemporary manner, the point remains that their thought does support an offer guidance with how to think about the environment in terms of attitude and action.

I will now address arguments from an ecofeminist position that emphasis crucial considerations when discussing environmental problems and questions of responsibility. For this, I will predominantly focus on the work of Val Plumwood, however, I will begin this analysis with Lynn White's argument for how Christianity has played its role in forming the anthropocentric viewpoint that dominates Western thought. This will then lead into Plumwood's critiques of the implicit assumptions of anthropocentrism and Western thought more generally.

Firstly, White identifies how "what people do about their ecology depends on what they think about themselves in relation to things around them."²⁰⁶ His analysis focuses on the question of how Christianity has influenced how we relate to the environment. He concludes that "especially in it's Western form, Christianity is the most anthropocentric religion the world has seen."²⁰⁷ The question is thus, how and why is Christianity so radically anthropocentric? White pinpoints the story of Adam, with Eve as "an afterthought", where Adam names all animals and in so doing establishes his dominance. Thus, Genesis teaches that "God planned all of this explicitly for man's benefit and rule: no item in the physical creation had any purpose save to serve man's purposes."²⁰⁸ Moreover, in standard Christianity, man shares God's transcendence of nature, man and God are closer than man and nature. Such that, this "not only

²⁰⁶ White. "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis," 1205.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid*, 1205.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid*, 1205.

established a dualism of man and nature but also insisted that it is God's will that man exploit nature."²⁰⁹

If Christian values guide, implicitly or otherwise, how we think about our relation to the Earth then this forms an anthropocentric perspective. This leads White to conclude that it is "by destroying pagan animism [that] Christianity made it possible to exploit nature in a mood of indifference to the feelings of natural objects."²¹⁰ The acknowledged caveat that "Christianity is a complex faith, and its consequences differ in differing contexts"²¹¹ allows for more nuanced analyses of Christianity.²¹² What is apparent in White's discussion however, is that the way we conceive of ourselves in relation to the environment is dependent upon historical and cultural beliefs as well as our current concerns. Thus, that a large portion of the West is responsible for initiating environmental destruction is also founded upon Christian values cannot be overlooked. That there is a specifically Western character to anthropocentrism is vital, not only to understand how we are currently deep within an unstoppable global environmental crisis, but more significantly, how we act to navigate through the coming destruction. Such destruction that is currently, and will continue to, disproportionately be felt outside of the West.

With this in mind, I will now address Plumwood's ecofeminist position to further examine the problems of anthropocentric thought and its presuppositions. The

²⁰⁹ *Ibid*, 1205.

²¹⁰ *Ibid*, 1205.

²¹¹ *Ibid*, 1206.

²¹² For instance, Schelling's own Christianity differs from the standard view. As for Schelling, neither God nor the human being transcend nature as both depend upon it as the ground. As such, this lends to how Schelling can be interpreted as non-anthropocentric since his theogony, following Böhme, is committed to understanding God as grounded within a nature. With this kind of theogony, the human cannot transcend nature since not even God is transcendent.

crux of her argument is that “we should reject the master model and conceive human identity in less dualistic and oppositional ways.”²¹³ Yet, “this form of ecological feminism, in reconceiving human identity, is not placing women, or in fact men either, back in undifferentiated nature.”²¹⁴ As such, at issue with human/nature identity is the presupposition of a dualism which leads to a situation of domination and subordination. A resolution outside of this problematic dualism is thus a recognition of difference without a recourse to oppressive models of identity. Thus, my reasoning for the inclusion of ecofeminism within this investigation of Schellingian evil is twofold: it allows for a recognition of where environmental responsibility lies and how this can be a potential of each human with the capacity for good and evil, and yet only actualised by some; and secondly, as this format of difference without priority in terms of oppression is analogous to the *Freiheitsschrift*’s law of identity.

At this point, I will therefore raise a clarification that is paramount to any argument about environmental responsibility regarding the implicit qualities of the term *anthropocentrism* and *human*. Plumwood argues that “the western mapping of a gender hierarchy onto the nature/culture distinction has been a major culprit in the destruction of the biosphere.”²¹⁵ Insofar as nature is feminine, and culture is male. However, typically this is understood as nature/human, implying that what is considered male is synonymous with human.²¹⁶ The consequence of this is that the “use of the blanket category ‘human’ obscures highly relevant cultural and other differences between

²¹³ Plumwood. *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*, 35.

²¹⁴ *Ibid*, 35.

²¹⁵ *Ibid*, 10.

²¹⁶ We saw this within Žižek’s commentary in S3 of ‘man’ as the pinnacle. If ‘man’ is the indicator of humanity then this is problematic as it is exclusionary of all that is not considered male as properly human, or on the other hand, if Žižek is attributing the top of the hierarchy with ‘man’ alone, then this is equally problematic as supports oppression. In either case, it is interesting to note how man as particular is used as if it were the universal. This being a central characteristic of Schellingian evil.

human groups, and differences in responsibility for and benefits from the exploitation of nature.”²¹⁷ Therefore, as this thesis is investigating Schelling’s conception of human freedom as the capacity for good and evil, and reading this within an environmental discourse then it is crucial that close attention is given to these nuances. To clarify, it is not the intention of this thesis to argue that all humans are equally responsible for the global ecological crisis. Rather, a particular strength of Schellingian human freedom is that each individual act is defining of their own unique character. Moreover, the *Freiheitsschrift*’s framework of human freedom is formal and does not consider the content of good and evil. Therefore, Schelling’s formulation is not incompatible with the ecofeminist critiques of the generalisation of the human being. And rather, the law of identity supports how the generalisation is problematic.

Likewise, the compatibility of the *Freiheitsschrift* and ecofeminism is supported by its critique that it is the predominantly western culture’s practice of human identity and how we relate to nature that is at fault rather than the human being as such.²¹⁸ Differently put, although human freedom is the capacity for good and evil, this does not entail that anthropocentric action is the only form of evil, nor that it is actualised by everyone. Rather, a particular orientation towards the environment supported by western, mostly white, mostly male Christian values is how the ordering of the principles can be formed in the direction of evil.

As we saw with Schellingian evil in the analogy of disease and anthropocentrism, the control and exploitation of nature is closely linked to the control and exploitation of human beings.²¹⁹ In other words, the ecological crisis is not only a

²¹⁷ *Ibid*, 11.

²¹⁸ *Ibid*, 12.

²¹⁹ *Ibid*, 13.

problem of the environment, but it is an ethical and political crisis insofar as it is contributing to, and exposing, the profound inequalities and injustices that persist within the 21st century.²²⁰ The ramifications of western relations to the environment will thus impact those who do not partake, benefit from, or hold accountability for, the western perspective. In this way, Schellingian evil is once again evident insofar as western values are posited as the universal values and needs of beings, rather than recognising the ‘human’ (meaning western, mostly white, mostly male) is the false universalisation of a particular human culture at the detriment of others.

Moreover, the *Freiheitsschrift*’s emphasis on dependency and the use of birthing metaphors is supportive of forming a Schellingian ecocentric position. As it does not ‘background’ processes that demonstrate dependency and the role and value of the ground. The notion of ‘backgrounding’ refers to the non-recognition of both dependency and value of the Other within feminist thought.²²¹ As Plumwood articulates, “dominant western culture has systematically inferiorised, backgrounded and denied dependency on the whole sphere of reproduction and subsistence.”²²² The backgrounding of nature is the denial of dependence on “biospheric processes, and a view of humans as apart, outside of nature, which is treated as a limitless provider

²²⁰ This is supported by scientific prediction that those with least political power do, and will continue to, endure the worst problems that are a direct consequence of the politically powerful’s environmentally destructive behaviour. For example, within Africa, it is expected that “half of all Africa’s mammals and birds face extinction by 2100.” Which is only one of the ecological implications of the current disaster. However, given that “62 per cent of the continent’s rural population depends directly on what nature provides” it is paramount that action taken considers this. Source: <https://www.newscientist.com/article/2164774-much-of-nature-is-near-collapse-and-that-means-society-is-too/>

²²¹ Backgrounding is present within contemporary western culture in a multitude of ways. For instance, the lives, experiences and labour of women, the denial of the dependence on the lives of Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities for amongst numerous things, the fundamental infrastructure of the western world, and the notion of the environment as a ‘natural resource’. See: Reni Eddo-Lodge, *Why I’m No Longer Talking to White People About Race* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017).

²²² Plumwood. *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*, 21.

without needs of its own.”²²³ Schelling’s law of identity emphasising the interdependency of ground/grounded explicitly limits backgrounding insofar as it brings to the forefront that dependency is essential for identity. As such, the ground is not placed in the background, inferiorised, nor valued less. Rather, Schelling reverses this, with the *grund* being crucial not only for his conception of evil but for his metaphysics and ontology. Therefore, I argue that this demonstrates how the *Freiheitsschrift* encourages an ecocentric position.

Anthropocentrism is a western ideal insofar as it functions with the assumption of the human as the master, and utilises the exclusionary character of the west’s notion of the human to support itself. In deconstructing both the concept of the human and anthropocentrism I have therefore conveyed how the environmental consequences of such ways of thinking and acting can be characterised as Schellingian evil. Moreover, it can be recognised that Schelling’s formal capacity for good and evil does not mean that all humans hold the same level of responsibility for the environmental crisis. Rather, Schellingian human freedom provides the framework for recognising how anthropocentrism is a particular example of what Schellingian evil looks like in the world. As such, the *Freiheitsschrift*’s law of identity permits Schelling to be considered within an ecocentric position and to characterise Schellingian evil as anthropocentrism. S1 articulated how the earlier *Naturphilosophie* is inadequate since it cannot recognise individuation at any level, however, the law of identity allows Schelling to recognise individuality in order to pinpoint where responsibility lies within cultures of humankind and only hold those beings that actualise and dictate exploitation accountable.

²²³ *Ibid*, 21.

To end this section, I will make one final argument. As the reality of evil can be understood by the threat of the magnitude and what kind disorder it is, then anthropocentrically driven eco-destruction cannot be anything other than the pinnacle of Schellingian evil. For in such actions, the very possibility of the continuous manifestation of the Absolute and the Earth's ecosystems are threatened. The conditions that make life possible thus far balance precariously. Recalling the analogy of disease, the human being is thus capable of not only its own annihilation through ecological crisis, but moreover destroying the whole to which it depends upon in the process. Thereby, not only doing precisely what it aims to avoid (its own demise) but also the elimination of all current, and potentially possible life forms that exist upon the Earth. This scenario thus typifies what Schellingian evil looks like in the world given the formal account that we have analysed throughout this investigation.

Section Five: Final Remarks

To close this investigation, I will first offer a summary of what we have examined. I will then make some final remarks before considering questions that have arisen throughout this investigation and what remains to be addressed. In S1, I argued why Schelling's *Naturphilosophie* of the *First Outline* and *Ideas* was inadequate to respond to environmental concerns. The central issue being the lack of recognition of how there can be individuals and unities. As such, there was no means to grasp ethical responsibility within a framework which could not distinguish individuals on any basis. However, a strength of the *Naturphilosophie* noted was how humans, although indistinguishable from nature, were still nonetheless not superior within this framework, and moreover activity was prioritised at every level. S2 suggested that a solution to the *Naturphilosophie*'s difficulties of individuation are found in the *Freiheitsschrift*'s law of identity. Otherwise put, it is maintained through the mutual dependence and independence of unity and difference. This was analysed through Schelling's uptake of Spinozistic pantheism, and the "profound logic of the ancients" in the sense of derivation through the form of antecedent and consequent. This emphasised Schelling's commitment to a union of realism and idealism. From here, I examined how the law of identity is furnished with Böhman thought and suggested how this is essential to understanding Schellingian ontology, and as a consequence of this, how Schellingian evil is structured. I thus recognised the significance of the *Ungrund* for securing freedom in general and within the human. This provided the basis for the arguments made in S4 advocating that Schelling can be read within an ecocentrist position.

In S3, I asked what characterises human freedom, and what makes this possible. I argued that the human being is different yet not superior to other beings through an objection to Žižek's reading of Schelling as anthropocentric and offered an alternative reading of my own. From here, I clarified that human freedom is possible due to the reversal of the ontological principles expressed through the relationship of light and dark and I illustrated how these terms align with others found within the *Freiheitsschrift*. I outlined how goodness is a creative pursuit, and later in S4 aligned this with ecocentrism since both affirm reciprocal dependence and independence. This led to the consideration of Schelling's criticisms of theories of evil, with a particular focus on Leibnizian evil as privation. This demonstrated how Schelling is seeking a positive account of evil, rather than one that suggests evil is passive. Then, I considered the question of hierarchy in terms of the human being as the 'pinnacle' and how this is presented in the *Freiheitsschrift*. I argued that Schelling endorses a hierarchy of complexity rather than value and supported this through an analysis of Schelling's agreement with Baader that the human can only be above or below the animal. From this, I concluded that Schelling is not advocating human superiority in terms of value within the *Freiheitsschrift*. This argument lends itself to my reading of Schelling as an ecocentrist.

Finally, in S4, I outlined Schellingian evil and how it relates to Kantian radical evil and the work of Böhme. I examined anthropocentrism and ecocentrism within environmental philosophy, outlining the positions and how these relate to the characterisation of human freedom in the *Freiheitsschrift*. The central argument of this investigation was thus made by arguing that anthropocentrism typifies what Schellingian evil looks like in the world. I followed this with the suggestion that

ecocentrism reflects the structure of the *Freiheitsschrift* and that the *Ungrund* secures the text as maintaining an ecocentric position. The *Ungrund* achieves this as it is the primal otherness to the human and thus the human is decentralised from a position of superiority. To end S4, I considered the presuppositions of anthropocentrism through ecofeminism. I emphasised how it is crucial that environmental responsibility is not blanketed over all existing humans but rather only those responsible are to be held accountable. This provided further support for how Schellingian evil aligns with anthropocentrism as a predominately Western understanding of the human/nature relationship.

With this summary in mind, I will now offer a few concluding remarks. McDonald argues that “although human benefit (even human survival) is part of environmental philosophy, there is no “ethic” in environmental ethics unless the intrinsic value of the nonhuman is recognized.”²²⁴ That is, environmentalism becomes ethical when it recognises the Other in its own right. This investigation has argued that a speculative reading of Schelling as an ecocentrist is supported by the formal structure of the law of identity. Further, that what constitutes Schellingian good and evil is grounded in a recognition of the intrinsic value and reality of the Other, which is epitomised in the *Ungrund* – the indivisible remainder. As such, I argue that the metaphysics of the *Freiheitsschrift* cannot do otherwise than to advocate for the crucial recognition of ecocentrism and the essential role it plays in navigating the current global ecological crisis.

²²⁴ P. H McDonald. *John Dewey and environmental philosophy* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004). Quoted Within: Cocks and Simpson. “Anthropocentric and Ecocentric: An Application of Environmental Philosophy to Outdoor Recreation and Environmental Education,” 223.

Further, to reiterate, freedom is not exclusive to the human being. As Bruno articulates, “freedom, properly conceived, does not lie “beyond nature”, but is the decisive act that grounds the system of nature.”²²⁵ Freedom is thus not exclusive to the human being, and human freedom as the capacity for good and evil is grounded outside of itself, namely within the *Ungrund*. If freedom is not exclusive to humans, then the argument of human superiority due to their freedom does not obtain. Moreover, this supports the reading I am offering that the *Freiheitsschrift* is not anthropocentric in its structure as the *Ungrund*, the *x* which lies beyond all determination, is the central locus of all that is. As such, there is no hierarchy of value but rather a recognition of the variation of difference and the unity of all division is secured through the law of identity.

Coinciding with this structural analysis are the ethical implications. I have argued that anthropocentrism exemplifies the characteristics of Schellingian evil. As a ‘real life’ example, I paid considerable attention in S4 to understanding how this operates within an experiential context. Critically, the analysis of ecofeminism demonstrated that anthropocentrism is closely related to the western conception of the human insofar as both embody the denial of dependency and a rejection of the intrinsic value of the Other. The parallel between the western conception of the human, anthropocentrism and Schellingian evil is thus striking. Each assume that as a particular, they hold a universal position and actively deny Otherness. Moreover, the western ‘human’ disengages with the knowledge that their privilege is possible and maintained by those without it, whilst anthropocentric action and thought does the same insofar as it neglects its dependency on the environment for its very possibility of continued

²²⁵ Bruno. “Schelling on the Possibility of Evil: Rendering Pantheism, Freedom, and Time Consistent,” 14.

survival. These, I demonstrated, are the characteristics that Schelling associates with the human capacity for evil. This investigation of what anthropocentrism is both conceptually and in action thus supports my reading of this being a manifestation of Schellingian evil within the world.

At this concluding point I will now offer an objection to a possible way out of anthropocentric thinking before raising a few last questions. A potential solution to the problem of oppressive and damaging structures is often stated to be a broadening of the hierarchical top and inclusion of what is othered into the sphere of human valuation.²²⁶ The problem with this approach is that it does not challenge the structure of domination nor attempt to address the role of hierarchy and dualism that is contained within the structure of anthropocentrism. In other words, anthropocentric actions that conserve species or ecosystems for human gain does not provide an adequate response to the environmental problem insofar as they fail to think outside of a structure that denies the value and integrity of the other. This raises the question as to whether there can be structures of hierarchy which are not bound to the problems of those we have already encountered. In other words, can there be hierarchies without the structure of dominance/subordination, or is this a characteristic of all hierarchies?

As I have argued previously, Schelling's rejection of dualism in terms of the priority of idealism and realism, in all of its iterations, exemplifies how Schelling's philosophy advocates an ecocentric perspective and does not explicitly presuppose the structure of a problematic dualism which leads to the problems associated with

²²⁶ "The criticism here is that the conceptual apparatus relating superior to inferior orders remains intact and unquestioned; what is achieved is a broadening of the dominating class, without the basis of domination itself being challenged." Plumwood. *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*, 29.

hierarchy. Thus, if we follow Schelling in his aim to eliminate dualism²²⁷ then it becomes apparent that his philosophy is not one built upon domination and subordination, at least not explicitly. Rather, it is the reciprocal co-dependency of that which is differentiated and yet unified that grounds the *Freiheitsschrift*. Strikingly, it is the augmentation of identity into a form of false dualism or hierarchy that is at the center of Schellingian evil insofar as evil occurs when one acts in its singularity, as if it were the universal. Thus, I reject the notion that one only needs to widen what is valuable to humans to solve the environmental crisis, and this is suggested in a Schellingian manner with the recognition of the Absolute as *Ungrund*, the primal Otherness upon which all is dependent, without itself being determinable by the human.

The evaluation of hierarchy within this investigation thus raises the question of whether all forms of hierarchy are necessarily oppressive in their structure or not. If indeed all forms of hierarchy are oppressive insofar as they rely on a structure of dominant/subordinate then the question remains as to what implications this has for other fields of ethics, and how it is that a radical rethinking of structures is accomplished. Moreover, whether a hierarchy can be ontological without thereby either explicit or implicit consequences for ethics.

To end this investigation, I will now raise a few questions related to both Schellingian scholarship, environmentalism and how these can cooperate in the future. For, if the arguments of this investigation are accepted, then the question remains as to how this can lead to affirmative practical action? As Heidegger comments, “the world

²²⁷ “Dualism is the process by which contrasting concepts (for example, masculine and feminine gender identities) are formed by domination and subordination and constructed as oppositional and exclusive.” *Ibid*, 31.

now appears as an object open to the attacks of calculative thought, attacks that nothing is believed able any longer to resist. Nature becomes a gigantic gasoline station, an energy source for modern technology and industry.”²²⁸ Given the global environmental crisis, how can we enact this thought within action, and how can this line of thinking structure organised practical action? Although an individual ecocentric position can easily lead to personal attitudes and actions like maintaining a vegan lifestyle, or relying on solar energy for electrical power within the home are practical actions to be engaged with, the task of how to amplify this on a larger scale still remains to be enacted sufficiently.

Within terms of Schellingian scholarship the question of whether we can situate the arguments of this investigation within Schelling’s later works requires consideration. Does a structure of oppression as dominant/subordinate resurface in the *Ages of the World*²²⁹? Is this necessarily oppressive, or is there, as we have asked, a way to consider hierarchy without the implications of oppression? On a different note, it is possible to consider the law of identity as a beginning of an ethical system in its own right? And further what would it mean to use this structure within other ethical considerations? Despite these questions being beyond the scope of this investigation, they provide an insight into the future projects which could develop from the considerations contained here and offer more channels for how Schellingian philosophy is relevant not only to contemporary thought but also to be an impetus for practical action. What this investigation has shown however, is the striking resemblance between the western notion of anthropocentrism and Schellingian evil. Thus, it is the

²²⁸ Martin Heidegger. *Discourse on Thinking*, trans, John M. Anderson and E. Hans Freund (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), 50.

²²⁹ Schelling, *Ages of the World*.

commitment of this investigation that Schelling can be read to advocate an ecocentric position, and the question thus remains how this can be enacted within the world.

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